

JOHN CONSTABLE
THE PAINTER



E.V. LUCAS

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BY

E. V. LUCAS

*"Oh, Barton, how inferior are all the black Wouwermans, Holbeins,
Ruysdaels, etc., to a fresh Constable, with the dew on it."*

—EDWARD FITZGERALD TO BERNARD BARTON.



1924

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PREFACE.

There is a certain chronological appropriateness in publishing this book in 1924, for it was in the summer of 1824 that Constable's *Hay Wain* (now in the National Gallery) was exhibited at the Louvre and created that excitement among Delacroix and other French artists which led to the new school of French landscape painting. The year 1924 is thus the centenary of two notable events in art: the foundation of our National Gallery (of which, by the way, Constable, who had very strong prejudices against the study of pictures, disapproved) being the other.

I do not say, in the present case, that "it all comes out of the books I read"; but Leslie's *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable, Esq., R.A.*, and Sir Charles Holmes' *Constable and his Influence on Landscape Painting* have been each a great help to me.

I have to thank Mr. Gerald Agnew, Mr. Martin Hardie, R.E., Mr. J. P. Heseltine, Mr. Charles E. Russell and Mr. Malcolm C. Salaman for kind assistance; while I am grateful to Mr. James Greig for permission to use extracts from Joseph Farington's invaluable diary, which he edited for *The Morning Post*.

E. V. L.

September, 1924.

JOHN CONSTABLE THE PAINTER

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

JOHN CONSTABLE deserves a very special crown of glory—and if there is justice in Heaven he has it—for two reasons: one, his services to art, and the other, his services to his native land. For had it not been for his innovating genius, his uncompromising and undefeatable desire to capture and crystallise nature's moments rather than her moods, landscape painting all the world over would be a poorer thing; while how many Englishmen he must have awakened to the beauty of their country! It is difficult for us now, after all the years of the new landscape painting, to put ourselves in the position of a visitor to the Royal Academy in the early eighteen hundreds, and find for the first time a few square miles of actual meadow, stream and sky within a gold frame. Hitherto there had been landscape in abundance, but here was something else: here was weather! The scent of the flowers, the coolness of the wind, the sound of the leaves, even the twittering of the birds, were present too.

That was what Constable did: he brought English people face to face with England: the delicious, fresh, rainy, blowy England that they could identify, and after half-an-hour's coach ride from Somerset House, where the R.A. had its headquarters in those days, corroborate.

But did they hasten to corroborate it? No. So far from being moved in that way, they do not seem to have noticed the pictures at all.

It is difficult for us now to believe this, but it is a fact that all his life Constable was a neglected painter, who sold seldom and for years often not at all. In 1888 Miss Isabel Constable, his last child to die, left to the nation some hundreds of her father's paintings, oil studies, water-colours and sketches, any one of which, I imagine, would have been at the disposal of collectors during the painter's lifetime had they wanted them—and, of

course, had he become popular they would have wanted them. I don't say that Constable would have sold all; he might have taken a stronger line about the sale of studies and sketches than is noticeable to-day; but he would have been gratified and encouraged by the request. Yet there is no evidence that—even after becoming first A.R.A. and then R.A.—he was ever approached except by a very few personal friends and by three or four patrons late in his lifetime. Neither Sheepshanks nor Vaughan bought him till he was dead. Speaking roundly, it must be said that Constable worked in obscurity all his life, and even in his last and most prosperous years—when he was sixty—he did not get more than £200 for his largest picture.

The history of art is full of these obliquities of vision. Even in France, which is supposed to be an artistic country, as opposed to England's commercialism (a fallacy, of course,) Jean François Millet could be neglected for years and years. I find Rossetti writing to Swinburne from Paris, as late as 1864, about the condition of French art, which he found very unsatisfactory: "There is one man named Millet who can't sell his pictures except to some one who buys him up cheap and at whose house I saw a collection of them, really glorious things." So might a Frenchman in London have written about Constable forty years before, except that Constable sold to practically no one.

To us the blindness of English picture-lovers, looking at Constable, and of the French, looking at Millet, is equally incomprehensible; but if we are more surprised by one case than by the other, it is by Constable's, for he was setting before their eyes so much of the England which they loved and could recognise. But I suppose the mischief was that, at that time, as I have suggested, artists to be acceptable had to glorify, aggrandise, or theatricalise nature: above all to make her serene. For "natural painting" (Constable's phrase) the time was not ripe. Constable may be said to have been ruined by rain.

But he never wavered in belief in himself. He knew that after his death his fame would begin; but it is doubtful if even he, with all his faith in himself, could have looked forward to a day when the forgery of imitations of him would become an industry!



PLATE 1.

MR. GOLDING CONSTABLE'S HOUSE, EAST BERGHOLT,
WHERE JOHN CONSTABLE WAS BORN. (6½ x 19½ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY DAYS.

FROM 1776.

When John Constable was born, Claude Lorraine and Jacob Ruysdael had each been dead for ninety-four years; Philip Koninck for sixty-eight and Hobbema for sixty-seven; Richard Wilson was sixty-two and had six more years to live; Gainsborough was forty-nine and had twelve more years to live; J. R. Cozens was twenty-four, John Crome, in the next county, was a boy of eight; and Turner and Girtin were babies, each one year old. Cotman was not due for six years, David Cox for seven, and Peter de Wint for eight.

John Constable was born on June 11th, 1776, at East Bergholt, in Suffolk, a village standing high above the river Stour, which divides Suffolk from Essex. His father, Golding Constable, was (like Rembrandt's father) a miller, both wind and water, and his son, in time, came to know the practical workings of each; which there is no evidence that Rembrandt ever did.

As Constable's friend and biographer, C. R. Leslie, remarks, it is an excellent thing for a landscape-painter to be brought up to be a miller, as John was, because millers have to watch the weather, whence their motive power is drawn, and their gaze goes first to the heavens.

I don't know if it is possible for anyone to be a fine artist and not know it—to pass through a long life and sink into the grave without ever testing his hand. This being a matter on which we could have no statistics, it would be idle to say that, possibly, but for the fact that Constable was brought up among windmills, he might never have painted skies; but we may safely believe that but for that fact he would never have painted skies as he did.

Old Gerrit Hermensz van Rhyn had only one mill, but Golding Constable had four, two water and two wind, and was a man of considerable substance.

John, his second son, one of three sons and three daughters, made so unpromising an appearance on that 11th of June that the parson was summoned to christen him at once, for fear he should decide that this world was no place for him. Fortunately, however, he decided otherwise. Let us play with the thought that through the window he caught glimpses of the June sunlight

on the quivering June leaves, with a white cumulus cloud shining through the branches, and realised that life was worth living. Or perhaps there was a scud of rain and he thought of paint.

The records of his childhood are meagre. Leslie, who as an intimate friend would have heard the story for himself, says that he went early to a boarding-school in Suffolk about fifteen miles distant. Then to Lavenham, where an usher was too free with the cane. Then to the grammar-school at Dedham, just across the river in Essex, where he was pleasantly placed but minded the locality more than his book.

French was among his special studies, and we know that he failed there because when, in 1824, the Paris papers contained criticisms of *The Hay Wain*, then on view at the Louvre, Mrs. Constable had to translate them for him. During his Dedham lessons, says Leslie, a long pause would frequently occur, which his master would be the first to break, saying, "Now I see you are in your painting-room!" This tells us that even at that early age—fifteen to sixteen—Constable had a painting-room, which was in the cottage of an enlightened East Bergholt plumber named John Dunthorne, who, when he was not plumbing, and also very likely when he ought to have been, was painting landscapes. It was he who first turned Constable's mind to art.

It was now, after leaving school, that the boy was put to work as a miller—in default of carrying out his parents' pet wish that he should read for the Church. He was known as "the handsome miller," and the mill in which he worked is the one depicted in the little vivid oil sketch called *Spring* which I reproduce in colour [Plate 2]. It is well known because of the engraving in mezzotint by David Lucas, which I also give [Plate 62]. The windmill, like too many of its kind, has gone.

Windmills constantly occur in Constable's works, as in Rembrandt's, but latterly he found them elsewhere; not a few round Brighton; and had it not been said of the Dutchmen, it would be said of him, that no picture with a windmill in it can be a bad picture. But there are degrees of merit. Constable's younger brother Abram, speaking of his brother's work to Leslie, said, "When I look at a mill painted by John I see that it will go round, which is not always the case with those of other artists."



PLATE 2

SPRING (71 x 141 in.)
 From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum

CHAPTER III.

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

The accidents and chances of life, as time passes and we are able to look back and consider them in relation to their effects, often have the appearance of design. Could anything have happened in Constable's career more fitting or fortunate than the circumstance that the Dowager Lady Beaumont was living at Dedham and, when the young miller was seventeen or eighteen, her son, Sir George, paid her a visit? She might have lived anywhere else, or her son might have been without filial feelings or any taste for the fine arts. But no. The one man capable of helping a youth like Constable arrived on a visit to his mother, and, being known as a connoisseur and artist himself, was asked, through Mrs. Constable, to look at some copies of engravings after Raphael which the boy had made. He looked at them, approved, sent for the boy and showed him the Claude without which he never travelled; it is now No. 61 in the National Gallery and is reproduced in this book [Plate 4]. Thirty years later, I may interpolate here, we find Constable spending several weeks at Sir George Beaumont's house in Leicestershire, still studying his Claudes. And all because old Lady Beaumont chose to take a house at Dedham, or because there really may be, after all, some purpose and order in this clumsy world.

Sir George Howland Beaumont occupies so honourable a place in the history of British art as well as in the life of Constable that something must now be said of him. He was born in 1753, the son of the sixth Baronet, at Dunmow in Essex, and was sent to Eton, where the drawing-master at that time was no less a person than Alexander Cozens, the father of that first English magician with the camel hair brush—John Robert Cozens (1752-1799), whom Constable later was to call "the greatest genius that ever touched landscape," and whose drawings were to be copied by the youthful Turner and Girtin at Dr. Munro's house in the Adelphi. Thus is art linked.

Beaumont went on from Eton to New College and developed quickly into a virtuoso and a painter himself, his hero at first being Wilson. He married in 1778. His country house was at Coleorton in Leicestershire, his town house in Grosvenor Square. He seems to have known everyone, even Dr. Johnson, although

his name does not get into Boswell, while with Sir Joshua he was intimate. He is described as tall, good-looking, with polished manners and a gentle address. His benefactions were endless, from joining Dr. Munro in making poor John Robert Cozens' last days more possible, to working hard to procure Coleridge a pension. We have seen what he did to encourage Constable at the start, and he was a friend of Wilson, that friendless man, at the close of his career. Wordsworth stayed at Coleorton, and wrote poems there, some really inspired, and some merely inspired by Sir George's landscapes, which were mediocre.

But Beaumont's greatest service to his country was his share of the foundation of our National Gallery in 1824. The first pictures to be bought were thirty-eight from the Angerstein Collection in that year; to be followed by the gift of sixteen of Sir George's own, including four Claudes, which he presented two years later. This I think proves his public spirit and enthusiasm, for his pictures were very dear to him; how dear he did not indeed know until they had gone, and then he found that life was unsupportable without Claude's *Hagar* [Plate 4], as we call it, the picture which Constable had seen as a youth and had copied; and so he asked for it back, and it continued to be his companion until his death in 1827, when Lady Beaumont returned it to the nation.

Sir George was catholic in his taste, for, in addition to this passion for Claude and his patronage of Constable (who was, however, always a little too uncompromising and revolutionary for one who had stated of the perfect landscape that there must always be a brown tree in it), he discovered Landseer, and sat to Wilkie, and, when in Rome in 1822, with one hand commissioned a group by John Gibson, the sculptor, and with the other bought Michael Angelo's Madonna and Child relief in marble, which he presented to the Royal Academy, where in the Diploma Gallery far too many persons neglect to see it.

CHAPTER IV.

"THE HANDSOME MILLER."

1790's.

It is a pity that Beaumont did not write reminiscences instead of painting pictures with brown trees in them, for then we might



PLATE 3.

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART. (1753-1827.)
From the drawing by George Dance in the National Portrait Gallery, London.



PLATE 4.

LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES—"THE ANGEL
APPEARING TO HAGAR" (20 x 17 in.)
From the painting by Claude in the National Gallery, London.

be better acquainted with Constable at this early period. As it is, we have only such information as Leslie, who did not meet him until twenty years later, can give; and Leslie was not a biographer of genius. We know that, some time in 1795 or 1796, Constable, on a visit to London, met John Thomas Smith (1766-1833), who later was to write the life of Nollekens and "A Book for a Rainy Day," and was now engaged in etching cottages for a work on rural scenery. Constable seems to have made some drawings for him, and we find this excellent piece of advice in one of Smith's letters: "Do not set about inventing figures for a landscape taken from nature; for you cannot remain an hour in any spot, however solitary, without the appearance of some living thing that will in all probability accord better with the scene and time of day than will any invention of your own." From Constable's letters to Smith we learn that he was reading Leonardo da Vinci's Note Books and Gessner on landscape, copying prints, etching (we hear of a Ruysdael) and painting figures; but meanwhile was still enacting the part of the handsome miller, and was either actually among hoppers and grain or busy with the accounts. Whichever lot was his, he disliked it, although he did not rebel. "A worthy son," his mother calls him.

Evidence as to his looks at this time is found in the portrait by Gardner engraved in Leslie's book from the original now at South Kensington [Plate 5]. The portraits of Constable do not much change, depicting him first as a candid, simple, kindly youth and later as a candid, simple, kindly man. He had strong likes and dislikes and he expressed them freely; but in spite of the want of true appreciation, which never came to him in his lifetime, he seems to have kept himself sweet and for the most part free from jealousy or bitterness. It is true that the success of inferior talents sometimes annoyed him; but he betrays no littleness. So far as I can discern, although he seems to have enjoyed fun, he had no sense of humour.

Throughout his life he was too much absorbed by his art to be social. One cannot find in Leslie the record of a moment when he was really off duty. Even at night, when there were no skies to watch, he seems to have been thinking of to-morrow's work: how to treat this problem and that; whether it might not be better to shift that tree an inch farther to the left. This engrossment,

together with an inability to utter an untruth, at any rate with regard to other painter's pictures, may have tended to make Constable, if not exactly an Ishmael, a man not lightly to be intruded upon or often invited out. But we have, apart from the affection of few picked friends, testimony to his urbanity and kindliness from an unimpeachable source, his cabman. A hackney coach driver, after Constable's death, said to Leslie (as he chronicles in his "Recollections"): "When I heard he was dead I was as sorry as if he had been my own father."

We have further light on Constable's character in the remark of another authority, who said that he was not only a gentleman when riding on a stage-coach, but—and this seems to have been a compliment indeed, the fine flavour of which we are too late to appreciate fully—a gentleman at a stage-coach dinner!

But the best proof is Leslie's "Life."

CHAPTER V.

THE ART STUDENT.

1797-1802.

Writing to John Thomas Smith in March, 1797, when aged nearly twenty-one, Constable says sadly, after a reference to his father's business, "I now see plainly it will be my lot to walk through life in a path contrary to that in which my inclination would lead me." But happily he was wrong. Probably through the representations of Sir George Beaumont, fortified by the confidence of Dunthorne and the appeals of Mrs. Constable, when John was nearing twenty-two Golding Constable agreed that he should go to London and, if thought worthy, should study at the Royal Academy school. That was in 1798.

A letter of introduction to Joseph Farington, R.A., therefore was provided, and up to town the handsome miller went. This is the Farington whose Diary recently appeared day by day in the *Morning Post* year after year, to the confusion and rout of all who say that you can have too much of a good thing. Farington, who had been a pupil of Wilson, was then a prosperous landscape artist, aged fifty-one, living at 35, Upper Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, and acting as Auditor to the



PLATE 5.

JOHN CONSTABLE AT THE AGE OF 20. Dated 1796. (23 x 18 in.)
*From the tempera painting by Daniel Gardner
in the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

Royal Academy. From his Diary we get the true dates, which in Leslie's pages are three or four years out. According to Farington, it was on February 25, 1798, that "Mr. Constable, of Ipswich, called with a letter from Mrs. W—— (a friend of Sir George Beaumont)." The lady, Leslie tells us, was Priscilla Wakefield, who wrote books for the young and helped to found Savings Banks. How little can the young man have thought as he sat in Farington's room, waiting to present his letter, that in twenty-three years' time, on Farington's death, he was to take this very house for his own!

On the next day is this entry: "Constable called and brought his sketches of landscape in neighbourhood of Dedham. Father a merchant, who has now consented that C. shall devote his time to the study of art. Wishes to be in the Academy. I told him he must prepare a figure." A week later, on March 2, we learn that Constable has shown Farington the drawing of a torso, and that Farington has given him an introduction to Wilton, Keeper of the R.A. And thus his foot was planted on the first rung of the ladder.

A year now passes, of which we learn nothing, and the next date of importance is February 4, 1799, when in a letter from London to Dunthorne, Constable says: "I am this morning admitted a student at the Royal Academy. I am now comfortably settled in Cecil Street, Strand, No. 23. I shall begin painting as soon as I have the loan of a sweet little picture by Jacob Ruysdael to copy." Later in the year we find that Constable, in partnership with Reinagle, has actually bought a Ruysdael for £70. This Reinagle I take to be, not Philip, who was best known as a painter of animals, but his son Ramsay, who was a year older than Constable. It is not impossible, however, that it was Philip Reinagle himself, whose copies from Dutch painters were famous for their fidelity.

The interesting fact is that we know that the youth was not being stinted as to money. We know, indeed, that Mrs. Constable, like most mothers, was on the side of her son; and it must not be supposed that the miller was against him. Far from it. Golding Constable was one of the good fathers in the history of art, and he saw to it that John never was in want; but it is doubtful if he ever believed in his genius, or if he would have been as sympathetic as he was if John had been anything of a

prodigal. "Paint keeps the boy out of mischief": that was, I think, Golding Constable's comfort.

We learn from letters to Smith that Constable was copying Sir George Beaumont's pet Claude. Also that in the summer he explored the country round Ipswich. "It is most delightful country for a painter. I fancy I see Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree." His opinion of Gainsborough was always of the highest and warmest. In his last lecture at the Royal Institution, in 1836, we find him saying: "The landscape of Gainsborough is soothing, tender, and affecting. The stillness of noon, the depths of twilight, and the dews and pearls of the morning, are all to be found on the canvasses of this most benevolent and kind-hearted man. On looking at them, we find tears in our eyes, and we know not what brings them. The lonely haunts of the solitary shepherd—the return of the rustic with his bill and bundle of wood—the darksome lane or dell—the sweet little cottage girl at the spring with her pitcher—were the things he delighted to paint, and which he painted with exquisite refinement, yet not a refinement beyond nature."

Gainsborough, I may say, was the only painter of English landscape who really set fire to Constable, and part of the fire was local patriotism, for Gainsborough was Suffolk, too. But Gainsborough, one feels, never had any of the fierce ambition to catch a fleeting Suffolk phase as Constable had: he painted landscape because he loved it, but more from sentiment than from any passion to conquer difficulties of light and shade. Wilson was English, too, but his pictures were not; his pictures belong to a land of romance, hardly less real than Claude's enchanted scenes. What appealed to Constable in both Wilson and Claude was their exquisite light; there is no suggestion in his own work that he ever wished to paint like them.

The first date in 1800 comes from Farington, who on January 20th records that he lent Constable *Adrian's Villa* to copy. This was by Wilson, perhaps a study for the picture in the National Gallery. That summer the young artist lodged all alone in the parsonage at Helmingham making drawings of the Park. Constable's drawings, by the way, are very sensitive and charming, as any visitor to South Kensington may see. I give a few examples in this book.

In 1801 he moved from Cecil Street to 50, Rathbone Place,



PLATE 6.

VIEW NEAR DEDHAM (?). (9½ × 12 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

which was then the centre of artistic London, where his largest room had three windows, and where, he says, he hoped to keep himself to himself more than before. Other artists seem to have depressed him by their want of thoroughness or by their satisfaction with their efforts. Constable, we find, throughout his career was always more serious than most of his colleagues, and I fancy was not a very easy companion by reason of a profound preoccupation with his calling and its stumbling-blocks. As to his benevolence and integrity, every one speaks warmly; but he had little time for the more facile forms of gregariousness, and none at all, as I have said, for conviviality.

It is probable that he might have been happier had he been more friendly. Under March 7, 1801, Farington has this entry: "Constable called. He described to me the melancholy state in which his mind has been for some time. . . . He said he had been much discouraged by the remarks of Reinagle, though he did not acknowledge their justice. He said that in their criticisms they only look to the surface, not to the mind. The mechanism of painting is their delight. Execution is their chief aim." All his life Constable was subject to moods of depression, which always had their source in his own earnest and undeviating purposefulness, want of recognition, or the preference of the public for superficial attractions. All artists who are at once conscientious and unpopular are liable to such feelings; but most artists have more means of escape.

On May 25, Farington says: "Constable called and brought a small landscape of his painting. I recommended to him to unite firmness with freedom and avoid flimsiness.

"June 29. Constable called. His father consented to his practising in order to profess Painting, but thinks he is pursuing a Shadow. Wishes to see him employed.

"July 13. Constable called on me and I on him to see a picture, a view of Mr. Read's house near Dedham. It is painted on a coloured ground which he has preserved through the blue of his sky as well as the clouds. His manner of painting the trees is so like Sir George Beaumont's that they might be taken for his. He desired me to give him my opinion about price, and having mentioned 3 guineas, I told him that he could not ask less than 10 guineas."

In this year Constable visited Derbyshire to make sketches,

and at Derby met the famous Miss Linwood, for whom he painted "a background to an ox." Miss Linwood, whom we find him meeting again, some years after, at Leicester, where she had settled, was Mary Linwood (1755-1845), the embroiderer, who made needlework copies of the Old Masters. While Constable was in Dovedale, Farington (on August 19th) chanced to meet him, and tells us that he was with Mr. Whaley, of Newcastle, in Staffordshire, who had married one of Constable's sisters, and was paying all expenses.

In January, 1802, we know from a letter to Dunthorne, Constable was attending Mr. Brookes' anatomical lectures at the Royal Academy and was enchanted by them. "The whole machine," he wrote, "which it has pleased God to form for the accommodation of the real man, the mind, during its probation in this vale of tears, is as wonderful as the contemplation of it is affecting. I see, however, many instances of the truth, and a melancholy truth it is, that a knowledge of the thing created does not always lead to a veneration of the Creator. Many of the young men in the theatre," he adds, "are reprobates."

On April 6, 1802, Farington has this entry: "Constable I called on. I told him his picture has a great deal of merit but is rather too cold."

Again: "April 8. Constable called. I talked to him about his proceeding in art and recommended to him to study nature and *particular* art less." The picture then on Constable's easel was, I suppose, that which was accepted by the Royal Academy in 1802. It was called merely "Landscape."

Leslie, who thinks that Constable had hitherto been among the rejected, has two anecdotes which I am glad to borrow. The first is of Sam Strowger, once a farm labourer near East Bergholt and therefore a friend of Constable's. After having been a Life School model at the R.A. Sam had become head porter, and as such had to carry the pictures before the selection committee. One of these pictures, by Constable, showed reapers at work, with one man in advance of the others, in accordance with the Suffolk custom. The leader is called "the lord." In spite of Sam's lecture to the Committee on the accuracy of the work, they rejected it. Sam was full of sympathy for his young fellow-countryman. "Our gentlemen," he said pityingly, "are great artists, but they none of them know anything about the lord."



VIEW AT STOKE-BY-NAYLAND. (9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Of another of Constable's pictures which was not approved, the president, Benjamin West, said with great perspicuity: "Don't be disheartened, young man. We shall hear of you again; you must have loved nature very much before you could have painted that." He added: "Always remember that light and shade never stand still." We think now of Benjamin West, who was P.R.A., as a pretentious and stodgy painter of scriptural and historical scenes; but he could practise what he preached, too. There is a little water-colour by him at South Kensington, an expanse of English country under a heavy rainy sky, that has something of Constable's own atmosphere in it. But when we look at West's more formal landscapes in the official medium of oil—there is one also at South Kensington, numbered 314—we find that Sir George Beaumont's "brown tree" had a whole-hearted adherent. It was this kind of painting that Constable was out to slay.

CHAPTER VI.

"THE CONSTABLE COUNTRY."

It was Benjamin West who wisely persuaded Constable, in the same year, 1802—one of the most fateful in his career—not to accept the invitation of John Fisher, the Vicar of Langham, in Suffolk, and afterwards Bishop of Exeter and Salisbury, to become a drawing-master in a school. Many a fine artist has been an instructor; but probably Constable was ill-fitted for that form of drudgery. It was now, however, that he suddenly decided to leave London, its professors and dogmatists and art exhibitions, and return to East Bergholt, there to study nature and to work out a style of painting of his own capable of registering every meteorological emotion. In his own words to Dunthorne, telling him of this decision: "For the last two years I have been running after pictures, seeking the truth at second-hand. I have not endeavoured to represent nature with the same elevation of mind with which I set out, but have rather tried to make my performances look like the work of other men." Enough of that! "I shall return to Bergholt," he continues—the memorable date is May 29, 1802—"where I shall endeavour to get a pure and unaffected manner of representing the scenes

that may employ me. . . . There is room enough for a natural painter."

Except for occasional visits to London, the young natural painter may now be visualised, for some years, wandering about southern Suffolk and northern Essex, sketch-book in hand or with his easel on his back, seeking for beauty: in spring and summer for effects of light and shade among the trees and on water, and in winter for the shapes of trunks and branches. So still and absorbed could he be in his task that, Leslie tells us, he once found a field mouse in his coat pocket.

There are three Constable countries—the Stour valley, Hampstead and Salisbury; but the Stour valley is that which carries the definite article. As it was there that he had grown up it naturally dominated his affections, and whenever in later life he could escape from London he hastened back. A river valley, and especially one where the waterways are as numerous—and I might almost say as wet—as those that gleam among the green stretches that divide the uplands of Essex and Suffolk, does not lend itself to jerry-building development, and therefore the Constable country is very much as it was; and even such new buildings as the cottages erected at Nayland under the recent Housing scheme have a certain comeliness that absolves them from the charge of intrusion. But when you are by the actual river banks almost nothing has altered. It is true that at Flatford a tall chimney indicates that water-power now has a rival; but Willy Lott's cottage [Plate 8] is as it was, except that in the absence of Willy Lott it is empty and on the road to ruin. But there it stands, as in many pictures, and there too is Golding Constable's mill, where "The Handsome Miller" occasionally worked, and where his brother Abram afterwards lived. The trees may be taller but they do not seem to be so. As for Willy Lott, his present abode was the only grave that I found in East Bergholt churchyard with a recognisable name to it. For tombs of Constables I searched in vain.

East Bergholt has seen few changes. It may be larger than in Constable's day, but it seems to be little more sophisticated, having probably been preserved by that best of antiseptics, remoteness from the railway. Golding Constable's house [Plate 1], where John was born, has disappeared, and his windmills no longer endure. But whatever new building there may be is not



PLATE 8.

WILLY LOTT'S HOUSE, NEAR FLATFORD MILL. ($9\frac{1}{2} \times 7$ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

officious, and the general impression conveyed to the stranger is one of prosperous simplicity.

East Bergholt church is a fine open fane, with more light in it than almost any church I can remember. This luminosity is due to the profusion of glass windows that naturally accompanies the Perpendicular style, and to an extra one which has been cut in the west wall: a wall which, had the tower been completed, would of course be blind. The tower, however, never got beyond its first few feet, owing, the story goes, to the fall of Wolsey, its patron, with the result that the bells are swung in a wooden cage in the churchyard, into which the stranger peers curiously, expecting to find either a pump or a strayed animal. To be confronted with a bell-loft on level ground is to receive almost as great a shock as though it were (what it also resembles) a mortuary, with a corpse rampant.

I have seen no drawing of the East Bergholt belfry from John Constable's hand; but his National Gallery picture of the porch, which is reproduced in this book [Plate 9], is one of his most original works.

The village does honour to its famous son in a stained-glass window on the south wall. It is not a very distinguished effort (the artist thus commemorated would have found grave fault with the landscape in the right-hand corner) but the motive was sound. Near by, on the same wall, you will find one of the forty bombs which a Zeppelin dropped on East Bergholt and neighbourhood in 1915, without, however, injuring anybody.

The neighbouring Stoke church, which rises like a lighthouse on the edge of the hill above the Stour valley, occurs again and again in Constable's works. A little pamphlet which is on sale within runs serious risk of an action for libel, if not for slander, brought by the inhabitants of East Bergholt, on account of the statement in it that Constable was "a native of Dedham." Standing on the terrace in front of the church you have the whole vale of Dedham at your feet and a gleam of the sea in the far distance.

Dedham itself seems to have developed little. Constable's fame as a schoolboy there, and afterwards as the celebrant of the church and the water-mill (which was also his father's), is not commemorated. I found, however, in the "Red Lion" some engravings after his work.

Although Constable was a realist in his painting of effects he rarely painted exactly what he saw, as anyone may prove by a visit to his "country" armed with reproductions of his favourite pictures. He would have said, as Whistler did say later, that to take nature as she is is to tell the pianist he may sit on the keyboard. Hence you find that Constable moved trees and rivers to please his sense of composition and took liberties even with church towers. There are at the Tate two pictures of Langham church, in both of which is a pond which nothing but an earthquake could set again in that position. All this adaptation is right and proper, but Constable insisted so often on the importance of working on the spot and being authentic that it may surprise some of his admirers. What he meant was, getting the authentic spirit rather than the letter.

CHAPTER VII.

PORTRAITS AND ALTAR-PIECES.

1803-1810.

One or two entries in Farington's diary help us in 1803. "March 23, Constable called and brought several small studies which he painted from nature in the neighbourhood of Dedham." The next day he called again and took the sketches away. Farington does not comment on their merit: but they would probably be too daring for his topographical taste. On April 1 Farington lent Constable another Wilson to copy—*Mæcenas's Villa*. In the Academy the young artist had two "Studies from Nature" and two "Landscapes," sent in from 3, Spur Street, Leicester Square.

Almost immediately after the Academy opened he embarked for a month's voyage in an East Indiaman between London and Deal, as the guest of the captain, a friend of his father's. Here he made many drawings, some of which are at South Kensington. On returning to London he was well enough off to buy two little pictures by Gaspard Poussin, "whose works," he wrote in 1821, "contain the highest feeling of landscape painting."

Of the rest of 1803 we know nothing; but on December 2, 1803, Farington writes: "Sir George Beaumont told Hoppner he would



PLATE 9.

CHURCH PORCH, BERGHOLT, SUFFOLK. (17½ × 14 in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.

give anything to see an accomplished Landscape Painter arise." This seems to be a proof that Sir George had little belief in his Suffolk protégé, especially as he went on to speak highly of the efforts of James Ward and S. W. Reynolds.

Although settled at East Bergholt, Constable seems to have been often in London. Farington tells us that on February 9, 1804, Constable called on him and said that he had decided, for a while at any rate, not to send anything to the R.A. exhibition. Farington advised him to change his mind, because an exhibition gives an artist the opportunity of seeing his work with "a fresh eye"; but Constable at this time was in full revolt against pictures as the rival of nature. One must go to the fountain head, was his ruling creed.

Yet he could admire painting, none the less, for the next day, calling again on Farington, he was full of enthusiasm for the great Rubens landscape belonging to Sir George Beaumont (now in the National Gallery) the *Château de Steen*. Benjamin West had told Constable that James Ward's picture painted in imitation of it (*St. Donatt's Castle*, I suppose, now at South Kensington) was the best since Rubens, but Constable found it a very inferior production, proving that "original observation of nature" is necessary.

Rubens and Constable had this in common, that they both painted only such landscape as they knew and loved. Constable, it is true, accepted commissions which now and then took him into strange country, but roughly one can say that his subjects chose him more than he chose his subjects. Rubens painted landscape partly because it was big and prosperous and he enjoyed pitting his brush against it, and partly because he owned some of it. But always because he liked the task.

Farington's entry on June 1, 1804, is interesting. He first says that Constable called and told him that he was now painting farmers' portraits, as large as life, for three guineas each when a hand was also depicted, or for two guineas without that hand. He then adds: "Constable has a House of His own near His Father, where He works hard and has time in the afternoons to cultivate Landscape painting." This, if truly understood or reported, implies that Constable was either actually milling again, or performing a clerk's duties for the mill.

One of the 1804 picture groups is on loan at the Tate Gallery :

Mr. and Mrs. George Bridges, of Lawford, Essex, and family." It is a formidable picture, with the two burly parents—Mr. Bridges being exceedingly John Bullish—six daughters and two sons, showing quite a number of hands! But all that it does is to cause one to regret the precious hours that it must have kept the painter away from the Stour valley.

There is now, for some considerable time, little precise information concerning Constable. We know him to have been busy because that was his nature: "J.C.," wrote his uncle, David Pike Watts, in 1807, "is industrious in his profession, temperate in diet, plain in dress, frugal in expenses and in his professional character has great merit." We know that in 1804 he painted for Brantham church an altar-piece, which is still there. It represents *Christ blessing little children*, a subject that would appeal to one who was always happy in a nursery. "His fondness for children," says Leslie, "exceeded that of any other man I ever knew."

I cannot call it a good picture. The composition is timid and the painting undistinguished. It is also in very bad condition, the result, I suppose, of damp. A subjoined card states that this is one of the very few figure subjects that Constable painted, adding ambiguously, and with a suggestion that he was of avaricious nature, "and one of the fewer still that he ever gave away." The card, moreover, is six years out in the date of painting, giving that as 1810. Brantham in Constable's time was the tiniest hamlet; it is now populous by reason of the adjacent xylonite works, around which a colony has sprung.

Constable once again and once only made a religious picture, this time a few years later, for Nayland church, in 1809, and this also is still shown. The subject is *Christ blessing the bread and wine*—just a single figure—and here the painter was more successful. But it is only too evident that the figure was not his true line. The picture, which hangs over the Communion table, has, however, sanctity enough to justify its presence there: one feels that the painter was inspired by reverence and did all that he could.

When in 1811 the British Institution gave Benjamin West £3,000 for his *Christ healing the sick*, Mrs. Constable stoutly said that she preferred her son's Nayland picture, and that if that was the market price of such productions his future was assured.



The British Institution, by the way, was founded, in the year 1805, on the ruins of Alderman Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery—the "British Institution for promoting the Fine arts in the United Kingdom"—and I mention it because the annual exhibition was to provide Constable, to the end of his life, with a second place to which to send his work. The gallery stood where Marlborough House now is. There were two exhibitions every year, one in the winter for living painters, when prizes were awarded, and one for Old Masters in the summer. At that time the exhibitions of the Royal Academy were held in the summer only, at New Somerset House in the Strand. Not till 1838 did the Academy move to a wing of the National Gallery, and not till 1869, when it was exactly a hundred years old, to its present home in Piccadilly. After the British Institution ceased its activities, in 1866, the Old Masters' winter exhibition at the Royal Academy was begun; but latterly the custom—and a very honourable one—seems unhappily to have fallen into decay.

In 1805 Constable had one picture in the Academy, a moonlight scene; and in 1806, the *Victory*, sent in from 13, Percy Street. In the year 1806 he travelled as far afield from Suffolk as the Lakes, at the cost of his uncle Watts, and made a great number of sketches, but found himself "oppressed by the solitude of mountains." As later he told Leslie, he preferred "villages, churches, farm-houses and cottages," and he preferred also that they should be on level ground. None the less, he translated some of his Westmorland compositions into oil for the Academy Exhibitions in the next three years, and at the South Kensington will be found many of the sketches made on the spot. In 1807 he received a commission to copy family portraits by Reynolds for the Earl of Dysart, and in that year he had *Keswick Lake* at the R.A. One of the copies of Reynolds—a full length—was sold at Sotheby's in July of this year, 1924. It suggests fidelity but lacks any greatness.

In 1808 Constable contributed to the R.A. three landscapes called *Borrowdale*, *Windermere*, and *A Scene in Cumberland*; and in 1809 three landscapes. In 1810 he had a landscape and a churchyard. It was in 1810, says Leslie, that Constable added John Jackson and David Wilkie to his list of friends. They were both simple and direct men like himself, both of humble extraction and both protégés of Sir George Beaumont, who allowed

Jackson £50 a year and left a place always for him at table. Jackson, who was born in 1778, two years after Constable, entered the Royal Academy schools in 1805, at the same time as Wilkie, and he was now trying to get commissions for portraits. Wilkie, who was born in 1785, had got on so quickly that in 1811 he was made full R.A. He used Constable twice as a model for his pictures, both times as a physician.

Another artist friend of this time was Thomas Stothard, who was living in Newman Street and doing far too much work as an illustrator. Stothard's hobby was entomology, and Constable and he would walk together in Richmond Park and other places where butterflies were to be caught. "Come, Sir, put on your hat, my boys tell me the lilacs are out in Kensington Gardens": this was one of his invitations that Leslie quotes.

It was in 1810 or 1811 that Constable paid, so far as I can ascertain, his first visit to Salisbury, where he had a stimulating friend in the Rev. John Fisher, nephew of the Bishop of Salisbury (whom the Constables had known when he was Vicar of Langham, near East Bergholt) and now acting as his Chaplain. This young man, although by many years Constable's junior, was full of mature good sense and composure and was also in a position to be of real financial help if necessary. He had a house at Osmington, near Weymouth, and it was during visits there that Constable painted some of his finest seascapes [see Plate 11].

Constable's letters to Fisher are of great value in piecing together the record of his life and feelings; while Fisher's letters to the painter are often very nearly literature. One may discern in him something akin to Edward FitzGerald's detached sagacity, instinct for excellence and independence of judgment.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

1811-1816.

With the pictures *Dedham Vale* and *Church Porch, East Bergholt*, which he exhibited in London in 1811, at the Academy and British Institution respectively, Constable may be said to have

come to his own. Not to public recognition : that was still a long way off : in fact, he did not live to see it ; but to his full strength as an impressionist. Both pictures—Nos. 1822 and 1245—now hang in the National Gallery, where they can be studied at ease, and both are reproduced in this book [Plates 32 and 9]. Both, says Leslie, remained in the artist's possession to the end of his life. "Such pictures," he adds, "were too unobtrusive for the exhibition, and Constable's art had made no impression whatever on the public. But when we look back to the fate of Wilson, and recollect that Gainsborough was only saved from poverty by his admirable powers of portraiture, and that the names of Cozens and Girtin are scarcely known to their countrymen [this was written in 1841], we shall not hastily conclude that to fail in attracting general notice is any proof of want of merit in an English landscape painter."

Constable had now again left East Bergholt for London, where, according to the Royal Academy records, he was lodging at 63, Upper Charlotte Street, soon, however, to move to Spring Grove ; and in this year, 1811, his health seems to have been very poor, due not a little, I imagine, to a very human reason. In other words, the course of true love had set in and was not running smooth.

For it is time for another figure to enter the stage.

The Rev. Dr. Rhudde, the Rector of East Bergholt, who was a man of wealth, had a son-in-law named Charles Bicknell, solicitor to the Admiralty, and Charles Bicknell had a daughter Maria. Constable had known this Miss Bicknell as long ago as 1800 on her visits to the Rectory, but it was not until recently that he had begun to think of her with tenderness as his only possible companion through life and that she had similarly thought of him. But the son of the local miller, however handsome, was not at all to the mind of Dr. Rhudde as the husband of his grand-daughter, and for several years these two young people were kept apart.

They wrote to each other—and it is from Constable's letters to Miss Bicknell that we have much of our information—but they were not allowed to meet, and probably if Dr. Rhudde had known of the correspondence he would have stopped that too. The letters confirm our opinion of Constable as a man of simple sincerity and rectitude : they suggest affection and esteem rather than passion

or even emotion, and they testify again to the constancy with which he pursued his calling. He really does not seem to have had a thought that was not connected with his work. I will anticipate a little by saying that after waiting five years the lovers married, although still without Dr. Rhudde's approval, Constable then being forty and Miss Bicknell twenty-nine.

There was probably never a painter of genius whose life was less eventful than that of John Constable, and but for his letters we should not know even such simple facts as have been collected. From those to Miss Bicknell I now begin to quote.

April 24, 1812: "I met Mr. West (the P.R.A.) the other day; he had been much gratified with my picture of the mill. . . . I wished to know whether he considered that mode of study as proper for laying the foundation of real excellence. 'Sir,' said he, 'I consider that you have attained it!'" This picture was *The Water Mill*, exhibited at the Academy in 1812, together with two landscapes and a view of Salisbury.

A month later Constable, still in London, has visited the R.A. exhibition. Turner's *Hannibal crossing the Alps* is "novel and affecting"; Mr. Farington's landscapes, while beautiful, are "heavy and crude."

On May 24, just before returning to Suffolk for the summer, he says, "I have now a path marked out very distinctly for myself, and I am desirous of pursuing it uninterruptedly." In June: "I have all Cowper's works on my table. I mostly read his 'Letters.' He is an author I prefer almost to any other." Constable remained true to the gentle recluse of Olney. This remark was written in 1812; the book that Constable was reading on the night of his death, in 1837, was Cowper's "Letters."

In 1813 we find Fisher writing thus to Constable, from Salisbury—and the passage gives a just impression of his mellow style: "I despair of ever seeing you down here. What a reflection is it in this life, that whenever we have a pleasant scene there is little hope of repeating the view. How many delightful hours of pleasantries have I passed in a society that will never meet together again, except under the sod. It is one argument for living while you can live. 'Dum vivimus vivamus.' The same argument will, by the bye, hold good of reading. Read a book while it lies before you: ten to one if you read it another time. I only know, the little knowledge I have has been picked up

by odds and ends. In a bookseller's shop, late at night, at breakfast, or while waiting for a friend who was late at dinner."

In the same letter the writer congratulates Constable on the success of his great picture at the R.A. in 1813: *Landscape: Boys Fishing*. "I like only one better, and that is a picture of pictures—the *Frost*, by Turner. But you need not repine at this decision of mine; you are a great man, and like Buonaparte you are only to be beaten by a frost." The Turner *Frosty Morning*, No. 492, now hangs at the National Gallery on the same wall as Constable's *Hay Wain*.

So far as my knowledge goes Constable never painted a frosty scene at all, or indeed anything in winter, except the sea. Fisher indeed once rallied him on this point, reminding him that there were four seasons in all. But Constable would not change. The public, he said, had come to expect summer scenes from him, adding—rather oddly, I think—that he would not disappoint it!

In this year, 1813, Constable's price for portraits had risen to fifteen guineas, and he seems to have had plenty of sitters. In June he dined with the Royal Academicians and sat next to Turner, who "entertained" him with his "wonderful range of mind." In the letter describing the dinner Constable says that he is for the first time leaving London with plenty of money in his pockets. But he must never be thought of as being in any real financial difficulties; although now and then he had to borrow. He had none of the poverty and frustration without which, according to an old and foolish tradition, genius cannot really thrive. On the contrary, although he was slow in making his way, as original and revolutionary workers must expect to be, he was mainly happy and always well-fed, and probably, next to the melancholy which the postponement of his marriage involved, whatever depression he knew came more from the loss of Suffolk skies and the scents and breezes of the Stour valley than from want of recognition.

Early in 1814 he took into his service his old friend Dunthorne's son Johnny, to "set his palette" and so forth. The picture then on the easel was *Willy Lott's House*, a sketch for which is at South Kensington [Plate 8]. This year was made memorable by the sale of two landscapes, possibly those at the Royal Academy, *Ploughing Scene: Suffolk* and *The Ferry*.

In 1815 old Mrs. Constable died, to her son's great grief. Of

his work in this year we hear nothing, the letters being mainly concerned with the lover's woes. But at the Academy he had a number of exhibits : five paintings and three drawings. Among the paintings was *Boat-building*, now at South Kensington, which Leslie calls "a perfect work." "Such," he adds, "is its atmospheric truth that the tremulous vibration of the heated air near the ground seems visible." Constable never succeeded in selling it.

Early in 1816 Golding Constable died, leaving John £4,000 as his share of the estate ; and on October 2, without waiting longer for the conversion of Dr. Rhudde, who had even gone so far as to repudiate his grand-daughter, or for Mr. Bicknell's permission, John Constable and Maria Bicknell were married by the Rev. John Fisher. That admirable divine had thus prepared the way : "My dear Constable, I am not a great letter writer, and when I take pen in hand I generally come to the point at once. I, therefore, write to tell you that I intend to be in London on Tuesday evening, the 24th, and on Wednesday shall hold myself ready and happy to marry you. There, you see, I have used no round-about phrases ; but said the thing at once, in good plain English. So, do you follow my example, and get you to your lady, and instead of blundering out long sentences about 'the Hymeneal altar,' etc., say that on Wednesday, September 25, you are ready to marry her. If she replies, like a sensible woman, as I suspect she is, 'Well, John, here is my hand, I am ready,' all well and good. If she says 'Yes, but another day will be more convenient,' let her name it, and I am at her service."

The marriage was celebrated, and the couple spent their honeymoon in Fisher's Osmington house. The portrait of Mrs. Constable in the National Gallery, which I reproduce on the next page, was painted in July of this year. While staying at Osmington Constable painted Fisher.

Concerning Mrs. Constable, this portrait, and a few extracts from her letters to her dear John, are almost all we know. They tell that she was of a sweet disposition and had a simple sincerity, or sincere simplicity, not unlike her husband's. The portrait, even if there were not the evidence of her short life, would tell us further that she was not physically strong.



PLATE 12.

MRS. CONSTABLE. Dated 1816. ($11\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.

CHAPTER IX.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD, SALISBURY.

1816-1821.

With his marriage Constable settled down to the last period of his uneventful career. He was now serene, and contented with everything but his status as an artist, which had not much improved; but he was to keep on his way undeviatingly to the end in spite of the coolness of the reception which awaited his pictures. I repeat, however, that he must not be thought of as embittered: surprised, yes; even now and then bewildered, as well as pained, to see the public preference for facile work behind which was neither knowledge nor passion; but in his pursuit of his ideals, in his love of nature, of his wife, and of his growing family, he was to be happy for the next few years.

To the Academy Constable had sent in 1816 *A Wheatfield* and *A Wood*; while in 1817 he exhibited Fisher's portrait, *Wivenhoe Park*, a *Cottage*, and a *Scene on a Navigable River*: all from No. 1, Keppel Street, off Russell Square, where the Constables had settled. This habitation Fisher had nicknamed "Ruysdael House." To-day it is no more, having vanished in the Duke of Bedford's rebuilding schemes.

It was in 1817 that Charles Robert Leslie enters the circle, and it is fortunate that he did so, for the story thenceforward has more continuity.

Constable's biographer was born in London, of American parents, in 1794. His early days were spent in Philadelphia, where a bookselling career was contemplated, but he painted in his odd time and made so good a portrait of the English actor George Frederick Cooke, then on tour in America, that a fund was collected by some Philadelphia friends and the youth was sent to London, in 1811, to study in the Royal Academy schools. After experimenting in the grand manner under that other Philadelphian, Benjamin West, Leslie took to a kind of glorified illustration, choosing his subjects from famous plays and novels, his method coming somewhere between Hogarth and W. P. Frith. Perhaps his best-known work is *Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman*, the episode in "Tristram Shandy" when the good old soul was so very near temptation, versions of which are to be seen both at South Kensington and the Tate. Leslie's Life of his

friend appeared in 1843, and a second edition in 1845. His own memoirs were edited by Tom Taylor in 1860, the year following his death. His son George Denham Leslie became a landscape painter and an R.A., but his work was of the placid acceptive school rather than the challenging one of his father's old friend.

It was in 1819 that Constable sent his first really large picture to the Academy—*A Scene on the River Stour*—afterwards called *The White Horse*. It is now in the Diploma Gallery of Burlington House, but it is not Constable's Diploma work. A sketch for it is at Kensington [Plate 48]. Here was an astonishing attempt to translate the life and movement of a river valley into paint, but there is no evidence that it created any strong impression among those who saw it; yet since in the autumn the artist was made an Associate, we must suppose that by his fellow craftsmen it was appreciated. "What I aim at in my pictures," Constable had once written, "is light—dews—breezes—bloom—and freshness; not one of which has yet been perfected on the canvas of any painter in the world." *The White Horse*, or *The Leaping Horse*, achieved much of this ambition. It was bought by the painter's friend Fisher—probably at the full price which Constable set upon it, one hundred guineas. To the British Institution in the same year, 1819, Constable sent *Osmington Shore, near Weymouth*, and *A Mill*. The Weymouth picture may be the fine windy thing at the National Gallery [Plate 11], No. 2652, one of the Salting pictures, which, were it dropped into an exhibition of to-day, would surprise only by its strength and truth and vivacity and lead to no enquiry as to the date of the painting. Or it may be the larger treatment of the same subject, more sedate and venerable in tone, that hangs in the Louvre.

In this year the Constables' second child, Maria Louisa, called "Minna," was born, and, says the proud father, "a more lovely little girl, at a month old, was never seen." She lived until 1883 and did not marry.

In 1820 the Constable family paid a visit to Fisher at Salisbury, and the artist made a number of those Salisbury sketches which have become famous, and found a new patron in Mr. Tinney, the solicitor, who became the owner of the large picture of Stratford Mill with boys fishing—one of them, in Sir George Beaumont's phrase, "undergoing the agony of a bite"—which was engraved by David Lucas under the dreadful title *The Young Waltonians*.

Fisher gave his friend a copy of White's "Selborne," which we see him reading with delight and finding in it proof of Sir Joshua's remark that "the virtuous man alone has true taste." The book, he adds, is an addition to his estate.

It was in the year 1821 that he took a house in Hampstead at 2, Lower Terrace, where his family could enjoy the fresh air, retaining "Ruysdael House" as a studio and show-room. He was planning to copy one of Mr. Angerstein's large marine Claudes as a task of value to himself and a property to his children: "the very doing of it will bring me into communion with Claude himself," he wrote to Fisher. But the project was not carried through. He also had in his rooms two borrowed drawings by J. R. Cozens, one "very solemn," one "very lovely," and "all poetry."

The chief Academy picture of 1821 was called *Landscape : Noon*, Constable's third work on a six-foot canvas. Since this picture was destined, in France in 1824, to provoke a revolution and to pass into history as *The Hay Wain* [Plate 17], I should like to be able to say something here of its English reception: but the principal papers, such as the *Times*, *Morning Post*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Observer*, *Englishman*, and *Guardian* passed it by, referring to the works only of the "leading artists," who were then Lawrence, Beechey, Fuseli, Stothard, Thompson, Hilton, Callcott, Collins, Mulready, Wilkie, Phillips, the Chalons and Starke. In the *Examiner*, however, are the following enlightened comments over the initials R.H.: "339, *Landscape—Noon*, is a picture by Constable, which we think approaches nearer to the actual look of rural nature than any modern landscape whatever. An able judge of Art, who saw and admired it with us, thought it a little mannered, from a certain sparkle that is over it. We do not think so, but granting the objection to be just, it is a mere slight flaw in a diamond, for what an open-air and fresh and leafy look it has, with its cottage and foreground so brightly and yet so modestly contrasting their reddish hue with the green and blue and yellow tints of the trees, fields and sky—a sky which for noble volume of cloud and clear light we have never at any time seen exceeded except by Nature. How tastefully is the bit of red introduced upon the collar of the team of horses in the sky-and-tree-reflecting water, and how does the eye delight to peep, with the luxurious feeling of a Faun or Sylvan, under and through

the clustering foliage into the meadows and fields beyond. How completely in keeping is the work throughout, in its unaffected pencilling, colour and character. We challenge the Dutch Masters to shew us anything better than this."

CHAPTER X.

MATURITY.

1821-1824.

In this chapter I propose to take the story of Constable's life from the autumn of 1821 to the moment when the critics and painters of Paris were set in turmoil by the public exhibition of *The Hay Wain* in the summer of 1824.

In October, 1821, while working on this picture again after it had come back unsold from the Academy, Constable tells Fisher : "I have done a good deal of skying, for I am determined to conquer all difficulties, and that among the rest. And now talking of skies, it is amusing to us to see how admirably you fight my battles; you certainly take the best possible ground for getting your friend out of a scrape. That landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids. Sir Joshua Reynolds, speaking of the landscapes of Titian, of Salvator, and of Claude, says : 'Even their *skies* seem to sympathise with subjects.' I have often been advised to consider my sky as '*a white sheet thrown behind the objects.*' Certainly, if the sky is obtrusive, as mine are, it is bad; but if it is evaded, as mine are not, it is worse; it must and always shall with me make an effectual part of the composition. It will be difficult to name a class of landscape in which the sky is not the key note, the standard of scale, and the chief organ of sentiment.

"You may conceive, then," he adds, "what a 'white sheet' would do for me, impressed as I am with these notions, and they cannot be erroneous. The sky is the source of light in nature, and governs everything; even our common observations on the weather of every day are altogether suggested by it. The difficulty of skies in painting is very great, both as to composition and execution; because, with all their brilliancy, they ought not to



PLATE 13.

STUDY AT HAMPSTEAD—EVENING. Dated 1823. (8½ x 10 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

come forward, or, indeed, be hardly thought of any more than extreme distances are; but this does not apply to phenomena or accidental effects of sky, because they always attract particularly."

One of the chief differences between one landscape painter and another is in the handling of the sky. Not so much the actual painting, as the success with which they get it *over* the country. So many contrive to make only a distant back-cloth of it. Constable brings his clouds right overhead. And how eminently so does one of his derivatives—Eugène Boudin—whom Corot for that very reason called "Le roi des cieux"!

Constable concludes his letter: "Does not the Cathedral [Salisbury] look beautiful among the golden foliage? Its solitary grey must sparkle in it."

In his reply Fisher says: "I was glad to see your handwriting so clear and smooth: certain proof of a tranquil mind." And he, in turn, puts a question at the end, "How many dinners a week does your wife get you to eat at a regular hour and like a Christian?"—here putting his finger on one of the painter's frailties which in course of time was to lead to very serious physical trouble.

At the end of 1821 died Farington, the artist and diarist, and in 1822 the Constables moved into his house at 35, Charlotte Street. This house still stands, and it has a tablet on it associating it with Constable's name, but in the process of renumbering it has become 76. The district, countrified in Constable's day, is now squalidly urban, foreign waiters chiefly inhabiting it in the place of the artists of old.

The chief news in 1822 is that *Landscape, Noon*, now and for evermore *The Hay Wain*, having been sent to the British Institution, a Frenchman seeing it there had made an offer of seventy pounds for it, "without the frame, to form part of an Exhibition in Paris"; but the painter did not want to accept so little. And we shall see that he was right to refuse.

Fisher's uncle, the Bishop, in the spring of 1822 commissioned a large picture of Salisbury Cathedral as a wedding present for his daughter: to remind her, in London, of her old home. He wished to have "a more serene sky" than in the small picture which Constable had already made.

During the autumn, while moving, Constable was taken ill and all his work was delayed; and he seems, in consequence, to

have become a little peevish, for it was then that he uttered, in a letter to the younger Fisher, his curious criticism on the proposed National Gallery to which I refer in the Preface : " Should there be a National Gallery (which is talked of) there will be an end of the art in poor old England, and she will become, in all that relates to painting, as much a nonentity as every other country that has one. The reason is plain ; the manufacturers of pictures are then made the criterions of perfection, instead of Nature."

In 1823 the *Salisbury Cathedral* was finished for the Bishop ; but the winter had been a very bad one for the Constable family, which now consisted of father, mother, two sons, Charles Golding being the name of the younger, and two daughters, of whom the second was Isabel. The *Cathedral* was much liked at the Academy, where Wilkie's pictures, Constable says, were " the finest in the world." It was at this exhibition that Fuseli made his famous remark about Constable : " I like de landscapes of Constable ; he is always picturesque, of a fine colour, and de lights always in de right places ; but he makes me call for my great coat and umbrella " : a remark often quoted and usually wrongly. In the same letter in which he reports this criticism Constable says : " I went to the Gallery of Sir John Leicester, to see the English Artists. I recollect nothing so much as a large, solemn, bright, warm, fresh landscape by Wilson, which still swims in my brain like a delicious dream. Poor Wilson ! think of his fate, think of his magnificence. But the mind loses its dignity less in adversity than in prosperity. He is now walking arm-in-arm with Milton and Linnæus. He was one of those appointed to show the world the hidden stores and beauties of nature."

And then came a visit by the painter to his early patron Sir George Beaumont, at Coleorton Park, which, for so affectionate and solicitous a husband and father, lasted an astonishingly long time—more than a month. From his letters to Mrs. Constable and to Fisher I make a few extracts : " Nothing can be more kind, and in every possible way more obliging, than they [Sir George and Lady Beaumont] both are to me. I am left entirely to do as I like, with full range over the whole house, in which I may saturate myself with art ; only on condition of letting them do as they like. I have copied one of the small Claudes ; a breezy sunrise, a most pathetic picture. Perhaps a sketch would have served my present purpose, but I wished for a more lasting remembrance



PLATE 14

BRIGHTON BEACH WITH COLLIERIES. Dated 1824. (53 x 93 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum

of it; and a sketch of a picture is only like seeing it in one view; it will not serve to drink at again and again. I have likewise begun the little grove by Claude." I have not been able to discover where these copies now are.

Constable continues: "I draw in the evening, and Lady, or Sir George, Beaumont, reads aloud. Sir George has known intimately many persons of talent of the last half century, and is full of anecdote.

"This is a magnificent country, abounding in the picturesque. The bell is now going for church. Sir George and Lady Beaumont never miss, morning and evening every Sunday, and have family prayers.

"In the breakfast room hang four Claudes, a Cozens, and a Swaneveldt; the sun glows on them as it sets. In the dark recesses of the gardens, and at the end of one of the walks, is a cenotaph erected to the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and on it some beautiful lines by Wordsworth." (Constable's picture of the Cenotaph is now in the National Gallery.) "There is a magnificent view from the terrace over a mountainous region, and there is a winter garden. I am now going to breakfast before the Narcissus of Claude." (This picture is now No. 19 in the National Gallery.) "How enchanting and lovely it is; far, very far surpassing any other landscape I ever beheld.

"At dinner we do not sit long; Lady Beaumont reads the newspaper (*The Herald*) to us, and then to the drawing-room to tea, and after that comes a great treat; I am furnished with some portfolios full of beautiful drawings or prints, and Sir George reads a play in a manner the most delightful. On Saturday evening it was 'As You Like It,' and I never heard the 'seven ages' so admirably read before. Last evening, Sunday, he read a sermon, and a good deal of Wordsworth's 'Excursion.' Some of the landscape descriptions in it are very beautiful. About nine, a servant comes in with a little fruit, and a decanter of water, and at eleven we go to bed. I always find a fire in my room, and make out about an hour longer, as I have everything there, writing desk, etc., and I grudge a moment's unnecessary sleep in this place. You would laugh to see my bedroom; I have dragged so many things into it, books, portfolios, prints, canvasses, pictures, etc."

Mrs. Constable had written, I suppose jestingly, of the rival

charms of the French painter. Constable replying says : " I do not wonder at your being jealous of Claude. If anything could come between our love, it is him. I am fast advancing a beautiful little copy of his study from nature of a little grove scene. If you, my dearest love, will be so good as to make yourself happy without me for this week, it will, I hope, be long before we part again.

. You will like me a great deal better than you did . . . ; The Claudes, the Claudes, are all, all, I can think of here. . . . "

Again to Mrs. Constable : " I really think seeing the habits of this house will be of service to me as long as I live. Everything so punctual. Sir George never looks into his painting room on a Sunday, nor trusts himself with a portfolio. Never is impatient. Always walks or rides for an hour or two, at two o'clock ; so will I with you, if it is only into the square." But the good example, unhappily soon lost its effect, Leslie tells us, and nothing could make Constable punctual or lure his mind for more than the briefest interval from his work.

Early in 1824 we find the Frenchman again trying to acquire *The Hay Wain* for exhibition in Paris, and Fisher, always Constable's good genius, counselling him to consent. He says : " I would, I think, let it go at less than its price for the sake of the éclat it may give you. The stupid English public, which has no judgment of its own, will begin to think there is something in you if the French make your works national property. You have long lain under a mistake ; men do not purchase pictures because they admire them, but because others covet them."

Another sagacious remark comes from Fisher in February, apropos I know not what : " I beg to congratulate you on the appearance of your name in the newspapers. Do not despise them too much. They cannot give fame, but they attend on her. Smoke gives notice that the house is on fire."

In April Constable and the Frenchman came to terms, the Frenchman buying *The Hay Wain* for two hundred and fifty pounds, and with it a small picture of Yarmouth as a makeweight. On May 8, 1824, is the further information : " My Frenchman has sent his agent with the money for the pictures ; they are now ready, and look uncommonly well, and I think they cannot fail to melt the stony hearts of the French painters. Think of the lovely valleys and peaceful farm-houses of Suffolk forming part of an exhibition to amuse the gay Parisians." Fisher was



PLATE 15.

THE BEACH AT BRIGHTON, DRAWN BY J. M. W. TURNER, 1801.

delighted. "The purchase," he wrote, "of your two great landscapes for Paris, is surely a stride up three or four steps of the ladder of popularity. English boobies, who dare not trust their own eyes, will discover your merits when they find you admired at Paris. We now must go there for a week."

Meanwhile Constable was having unusual good fortune at the Academy, where his *Boat passing a Lock* not only was liked by the critics, but on the opening day found a buyer for both canvas and frame for one hundred and fifty guineas. Although it was liked by the critics, "my execution," says Constable, still "annoys most of them, and all the scholastic ones. Perhaps the sacrifices I make for lightness and brightness are too great, but these things are the essence of landscape, and my extreme is better than white-lead and oil, and *dado painting*."

It was in May, 1824, that Constable first visited Brighton, where he made so many glorious sketches, and he took with him the pictures for France. His lodging seems to have been at Hove, then an isolated village, for he has the phrase "while in the fields, for I am at the west of this city, and quite out of it," and he refers also to the Lady of the Manor, who lived probably in that very charming house with a cupola that still stands, in its own grounds, in Hove Street. The actual address was No. 9, Mrs. Sober's Gardens. Mrs. Sober, he tells Fisher, in a letter, "has built a chapel; and a man who was taken before the magistrates quite drunk, when asked what he was, said he was 'one of Mrs. Sober's congregation.'"

Brighton itself Constable could not bear. He speaks of the bathing women as "hideous amphibious animals" with men's oaths and voices, and describes the beach as "Piccadilly, or worse, by the seaside"; but he made some wonderful studies there of "the breakers and sky—lovely indeed, always varying"; while, straying a little farther afield, he found windmills too, one or two of which still stand, even if their sails are motionless. How Constable would miss his windmills, could he revisit the glimpses of the sun! Writing to Fisher in 1825, concerning the destruction of one at Osmington, he says: "There will soon be an end of the picturesque in the Kingdom."

CHAPTER XI.
"THE HAY WAIN" IN FRANCE.
1824.

We now come to the greatest event in Constable's life and in the history of modern landscape : the exhibition of *The Hay Wain* at the Louvre in the summer of 1824, first among other pictures and then on a screen apart, to excite artists old and young, to provoke controversy, to lead almost immediately to that more natural treatment of nature which we associate with the Barbizon School, and later to the more faithful treatment of landscape, and love of spontaneous natural effects rather than arrangement of them, which we see everywhere to-day.

The letters of 1824 show that Constable had other French admirers besides the dealer who had been negotiating for *The Hay Wain*. On June 16 a French gentleman called on him, ordered a little picture, and said that in Paris the painter was much esteemed and would be received by fellow artists with acclamation. On June 21, the painter tells us, "Collins called; he says I am a great man at Paris, and that it is curious they speak there of only three English artists, namely, Wilkie, Lawrence, and Constable. This sounds very grand." Collins was William Collins, R.A., who painted pretty groups of fisher boys on the sands and was the father of Wilkie Collins, the novelist, who was named after Wilkie the painter.

On June 22 a letter arrived from Paris saying that Constable's pictures had arrived. On July 7 there is further news : "They have caused a stir, the French have been forcibly struck by them, and they have created a division in the school of the landscape painters of France. You are accused of carelessness by those who acknowledge the truth of your effect; and the freshness of your pictures has taught them that though your means may not be essential, your end must be to produce an imitation of nature, and the next exhibition in Paris will teem with your imitators, or the school of nature *versus* the school of Birmingham. I saw one man draw another to your pictures with this expression, 'Look at these landscapes by an Englishman—the ground appears to be covered with dew.'"

So much for Constable's own knowledge of what was happening. We, at this long distance, know more. I am not



PLATE 16.

STUDY FOR "THE HAY WAIN." 1821. (54 x 74 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE 17.

THE HAY WAIN. 1821. (50 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 73 in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.

qualified to trace the influence of Constable into the recesses of pigment as a writer who is also a painter of landscape may, and therefore for a full examination of Constable's impact I refer the reader to Sir Charles Holmes' great work on this subject: *Constable and his influence on Landscape Painting*, a book which, though it needs a crane to lift it to the reading desk, is well worth its weight in gold.

For so many years landscape had been negligible, a convention, for the most part only a background, as in the religious pictures of Italy and the Netherlands. The Dutch, with their pride in everything to do with their country in the seventeenth century, in order to be thorough exploiters had to paint Dutch skies and Dutch windmills and Dutch sand dunes and Dutch cornfields as well as Dutch big-wigs, and being faithful fellows they made them like; but only now and then was there any great glory or rapture, such as we find in Rembrandt's *Mill* [see Plate 25]. In Italy and in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and in England in the eighteenth, landscape painting had still its fixed traditions. For the most part it had to concern itself with classic scenery: mountains, lakes, ruins, nymphs, and a sky of untroubled loveliness. Such were the pictures which those who bought pictures (always a powerful factor in determining method) bought. Gradually, at any rate in England, the nymphs disappeared; gradually real scenery took the place of inventions; but the serene weather remained, the golden skies of Wilson and even Crome, although Crome was more alive to the genius of locality. Landscape painters as a whole still went out only when it was fine; Negretti and Zambra (so to speak) were their guardian angels. It was left for Constable and Turner to discover the beauty of rain and tempest, and ever since their day bad weather also has had honour too.

It is impossible for us now, accustomed as we are to modern landscape, to realise what a shock—whether of pleasure or surprise or even alarm, but a shock—it must have been to picture-lovers brought up on Claude and Wilson, Salvator Rosa and even Hobbema and Ruysdael, to come suddenly upon a scene by Constable with all its vivid pulsating fresh-air fact, all its excitement. For if I had in one word to say what was the chief new thing that Constable brought to landscape painting, "excitement" would be that word. His predecessors and contemporaries

may have enjoyed the open air, but Constable was thrilled by it : the task of capturing nature's fleeting expressions intoxicated him.

Chief of Constable's 1824 champions among the painters was Eugène Delacroix, who, in the light of this new evangel, repainted in three days the picture which he was showing that year, *The Massacre of Scio*, in order to heighten its tone. Constable's astonishing freshness acted upon him like wine. There is nothing in the picture (which now hangs in Room VIII. at the Louvre) to suggest Constable's influence to any one unfamiliar with the story of the French artist's homage ; but Delacroix was stimulated by *The Hay Wain* to paint thereafter with an increased liveliness. Writing some years later in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, he roundly calls Constable the father of the French *école de paysage*.

An earlier painter to be influenced was Géricault, who is known chiefly by his pictures of horse races, and who, when in England some few years before—he painted *Epsom Races* in 1821—had seen and admired Constable's work. Géricault died in 1824. Paul Huet, whose great flood scene also hangs in Room VIII. at the Louvre, was another to spread the gospel.

To return to Delacroix, although he took fire from Constable's genius and dominated French art for many years with his energy and histrionic vigour—there was in him, in spite of his nervous temperament, much of the robust and abundant force that was animating Hugo and Dumas at the same time, while the romantic spirit of both men he shared : indeed, he founded the Romantic School of painting in France—it was the influence of his friend Bonington rather than of Constable that we discern in his pictures. At the Wallace Collection (where there is no Constable) will be found a few small historical pictures by both men which, in their arrangement, animation and richness of colouring, are almost interchangeable.

Delacroix was born in 1798, and Bonington in 1801, and of Bonington I must now speak, for he too was involved in the new movement, although more by reason of subject than manner. The French market-places and coast scenes which he was painting with such brilliance, and which he began to exhibit at the Louvre in 1822, were exciting emulation among his contemporaries and delighting his instructor Baron Gros. Water-colour was still a

novelty in France, although its English practitioners had by that time brought it to almost its highest perfection, and although also Bonington's first instructor was Francia, a Frenchman. Francia, however, had long been settled in London, and is sufficiently English to be represented in the water-colour rooms at South Kensington.

Richard Parkes Bonington was born at Arnold, near Nottingham, in 1802, and at the age of fifteen went to Paris, where he copied in the Louvre, and it was while thus engaged that he made the acquaintance of a fellow student, the young Delacroix, three years older than himself. They remained friends until Bonington's early death—in 1828—severed the bond. I have discovered no evidence that Constable and Bonington ever met, although they might easily have done so when Bonington, accompanied for a while by Delacroix, spent some time in England in 1825.

In the room in the Louvre where Constable is represented certain pictures by Bonington also hang, and the different methods of the two men may be compared. Bonington has a lucidity and clarity that are almost of the air; where we see Constable obtaining his effects because of paint, Bonington appears almost to have got them in spite of it. Constable's influence was in manner as much as in matter; while Bonington's—I refer now solely to his *pleinairiste* work—was chiefly in subject. Bonington had more versatility than the impassioned student of Suffolk skies and waterways; he had dramatic sense too, and an admiration of architecture hardly less than that of nature. And he was a glorious colourist. I should say that had there been no Bonington the Barbizon School would have developed much as it did, but the Romantic School, of which Delacroix was the head, would have been less splendid in its efforts. Both Constable and Bonington received the King's gold medal for their 1824 exhibits at the Louvre; but Bonington, as I have said, was already known in Paris.

The chief names among the Barbizon men are those of Corot and Millet, and it is not easy to see Constable's direct influence in either. Millet indeed offers hardly any resemblance, although the famous rainbow picture in Room VIII. at the Louvre [Plate 18] has precisely such a storm brewing as we see in a little oil sketch which Mr. Charles Russell allows me to set beside

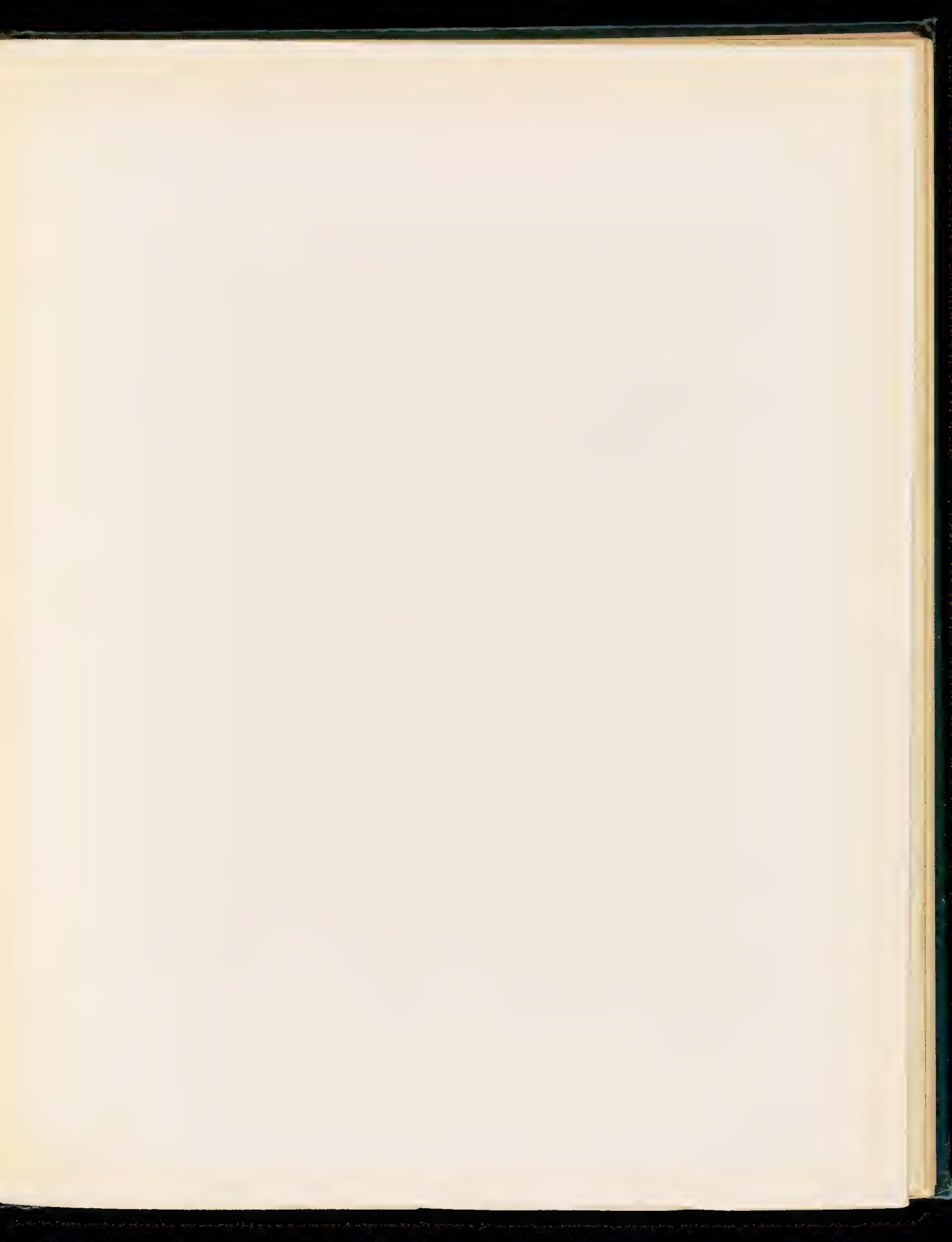
it [Plate 19]. Pure coincidence possibly, but interesting. Millet was only ten years old in 1824.

Corot, who was born in 1796, is known to have worshipped at the shrine of Claude and to have been not indifferent to Wilson. None the less, Corot was too much interested in technique not to have examined Constable's work with the utmost care when the time came. In 1824, however, when *The Hay Wain* was exhibited, he was in Italy, painting in his hard early manner, full of light and form but without feeling. He was then twenty-eight. In 1827, Sir Charles Holmes tells us, when Corot exhibited at the Salon for the first time, his work was hung beside that of Constable and Bonington. This may have been through sympathy and it may have been through contrast. I have seen nothing by Corot that absolutely suggests any borrowing from Constable; but the fact remains that before Constable reached France, Corot was painting with a kind of dry precision, and later he came to nature more as a lover, and remained her lover till the end.

The two Barbizon painters of the first rank who probably owed most to Constable were Rousseau and Daubigny. Neither, one feels, could be as he was but for this great awakening predecessor. But neither was painting in 1824, Rousseau being then only twelve, and Daubigny only seven. Rousseau did not see any of Constable's work until 1832; but in his maturity he looked upon the world of trees and water and cloud with eyes very like the English master's, and in Room VIII. at the Louvre is his great picture of Fontainebleau to prove it. Even better examples are to be found elsewhere in the same building, both in the Chauchard Collection, and in the Thomy-Thierret Collection, where all the Barbizon men are at their best, and where Rousseaus, Corots and Daubignys are very numerous.

Other derivatives include Diaz and Jules Dupré, and most certainly Boudin, but Boudin was not of the Barbizon brotherhood. More of this later, when we reach the National Gallery and the Tate.

It is often said by those who are weak in chronology that Georges Michel, the French painter, was influenced by Constable too; but this is a fallacy, because Michel, who was born in 1763, had established his style and was known as "The Ruysdael of Montmartre" long before Constable had established his and lived





LE PRINTEMPS
From the oil painting by J. F. Millet in the Louvre.



PLATE 19.

LANDSCAPE. (Panel, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
From the oil painting in the possession of Charles E. Russell, Esq.

in "Ruysdael House"! Both revered the same sources of inspiration—Nature and the Dutch.

For the next important experimental activity in landscape painting, comparable with Constable's realistic studies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, we have to go to France. England had remained in the Constable tradition, but in the 'sixties and 'seventies researches into the effects of light and shade were carried farther by Claude Monet and his friends, of whom Alfred Sisley was the most remarkable, and their style of painting, largely made up of spots of colour, was evolved, to meet the need of increased fidelity in reproducing sunshine and shadow. To some extent (as the large studies for *The Hay Wain* and *The Leaping Horse*, at South Kensington, show, plates 16 and 48) Constable had preceded them at their own game, for only by dots of paint could he catch and hold the sparkle that he aimed at; but his was never a complete surrender of the long brush stroke. The influence of Monet and Sisley seems now to be on the wane (although to my eyes their own work grows increasingly lovely) but Constable's still waxes.

Let me conclude this chapter with a passage from a letter to Fisher in January, 1825: "I had this morning a letter from Paris, informing me that on the King's visit to the Louvre, he was pleased to award me a gold medal for the merit of my landscapes. At the same time he made Sir Thomas Lawrence a Knight of the Legion of Honour. I have a pride and satisfaction in mentioning this to you; but I can truly say that your early notice of me, and your friendship for me in my obscurity, was worth more, and is looked back to by me with more heartfelt satisfaction, than this, and all the other notice I have met with, put together."

CHAPTER XII.

QUIET YEARS.

1825-1828.

The year 1825 was not a very happy one, for Constable's eldest son was seriously ill. The principal Academy picture was *The Leaping Horse*, now in the Diploma Gallery. Constable sent two others which, to his delight and surprise, a stranger

bought at once; and there being an exhibition of living artists, instead of Old Masters, at the British Institution, Constable sent *The White Horse* and *Stratford Mill*. Later in the year *The White Horse* went to an exhibition at Lille, and won its creator a gold medal.

The family having gone to Brighton for the eldest boy's health, we get such news as there is from the father's diary, kept in London for Mrs. Constable's entertainment. Thus: "September 13. . . . In the evening went to Mr. Northcote's, and had a delightful conversation about painting, etc. It is wonderful to see him with all the energy of youth. His eye sparkling so bright and so sharp." Northcote, whose conversations as recorded by Hazlitt belong to a year or so later, was now an old man of nearly eighty. Hazlitt, by the way, who wrote much art criticism, has a reference to Constable, and to the disturbance which was caused by *The Hay Wain* at the Louvre, in his *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy*, where there is a dialogue between a Frenchman and an Englishman on the methods and merits of landscape painting in their two countries. Says the Frenchman, "I perceive, Sir, you have prejudice in favour of the English style of art." And the Englishman replies: "None at all; but I cannot think our faults any justification of yours, or yours of ours. For instance, here is a landscape by a countryman of mine, Mr. Constable. Why then all this affectation of dashing lights and broken tints and straggling lumps of paint, which I dare say give the horrors to a consummate French artist? On the other hand, why do not your artists try to give something of the same green, fresh, and healthy look of living nature, without smearing coats of varnish over raw dabs of colour (as we do), till the composition resembles the ice breaking up in marshy ground after a frosty morning? Depend upon it, in disputes about taste, as in other quarrels, there are faults on both sides."

Constable's diary-letters again: September 16, "How much we have changed this house from what it was in Mr. Farington's time; his attics turned into nurseries, a beautiful baby born in his bedroom, his washhouse turned into a brewhouse, his back parlour, which contained all his prints, into a bedroom, and his painting rooms made habitable. Well done!"

On September 16, 1825, Sir George Beaumont called: "He



PLATE 20.

COAST SCENE NEAR BRIGHTON. (29 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
 From the oil painting in the Collection of J. P. Hoodless, Esq.

liked what I was about, but he wanted me to imitate pictures." Leslie follows this remark with three asterisks, which stood no doubt for a very vigorous protest by the artist against the Baronet's heresy. The chief picture on the easel at this time was the *Opening of Waterloo Bridge*, that animated scene; and still another version of Salisbury Cathedral was being made.

On November 26 we meet with a new acquaintance and patron, Jack Bannister, the actor, who was living in happy retirement at Hampstead: "I have just had a visit from Mr. Bannister to request a landscape; he has long desired one of me, from which, as he says, 'he can feel the wind blowing on his face.'" Two days later the old comedian called again, insisting on a picture. Constable says: "He says he must have one. I think he likes the 'Lock' so much that I shall reduce it to the size of Fisher's Old Mill; how I shall please him, or when, I do not know. He says 'he breathes the open air in my pictures, they are more than fresh, they are exhilarating.'" "

The next year—1826—has nothing eventful. Constable and Fisher exchange letters, and that is about all. The number of children was now brought up to six, the fifth being Emily, and the other, Alfred Abram. The account in a letter from Fisher of his small son's addition to the catechism—"And walk in the same *fields* all the days of my life"—gives Constable enormous pleasure; that, he says, is what he always wants to do, and in April he goes down to Suffolk to begin again.

In November he has another evening with Northcote: "He is always instructive and amusing. Talking of excellence, he said, 'It should be the aim of an artist to bring something to light out of nature for the first time. Something like that for which in mechanics a patent would be granted; an original invention or a decided improvement.' . . . He says, 'The failures and difficulties of success in the arts and literature are for the most part caused by our early habits and education. Virgil is driven into boys as the height of excellence, whereas he is but a farthing candle compared to Shakespeare. The first book he [Northcote] ever read was 'Jack the Giant-killer,' and he still believes it unequalled.'" "

In 1827 the family moved to what is now No. 40, Well Walk, Hampstead, Constable reserving a few rooms in Charlotte Street and letting the rest. He says, "This house is to my wife's heart's

content; it is situated on an eminence at the back of the spot in which you saw us [2, Lower Terrace], and our little drawing-room commands a view unsurpassed in Europe, from Westminster Abbey to Gravesend. The dome of St. Paul's in the air seems to realise Michael Angelo's words on seeing the Pantheon: 'I will build such a thing in the sky.' We see the woods and lofty grounds of the East Saxons to the north-east." The house remains and has a little tablet on it in Constable's honour, but the best of the view has gone.

The year 1828 brought both fortune and tragedy. The fortune was the twenty thousand pounds left to the Constables by the artist's father-in-law; the tragedy was the death of Mrs. Constable in November, leaving behind her seven children and a husband who, though he found solace in his work, remained inconsolable to the end. The youngest child was named Lionel Bicknell and he survived till 1887.

CHAPTER XIII.

R.A. AND WIDOWER.

1829-1831.

After his wife's death Constable made 35, Charlotte Street, again his chief home, using Well Walk as a country residence. Seven children were no little responsibility, even though foster-mothered by the painter's excellent housekeeper, Mrs. Savage, whom he describes as "anything but what her name implies."

On February 10, in his fifty-third year, the artist was made a Royal Academician. "It has been delayed until I am solitary," he wrote, "and cannot impart it"; but the honour gave him great satisfaction none the less. Fisher, in a letter of congratulation, said: "The event is in every way important to me, since my judgment was embarked in the same boat with your success." Fisher's devotion to Constable and belief in his genius never wavered, and no history of landscape art should ever omit the Archdeacon's name. A very gratifying essay could be written about the faithful champions and encouragers of those artists who had to make their way against popular blindness.



There seems to have been a visitation of brother-brushes to Charlotte Street on the day following Constable's election, among them Turner, who did not leave till one a.m., when "we parted," Constable tells John Chalon in a note, "mutually pleased with one another." This is the first record of correspondence with either Chalon. To-day these painters are rarely mentioned, but examples of their work will be found among the Sheepshanks pictures when you go to South Kensington to see the Constables. The brothers, with whom Constable seems to have been on very pleasant terms, were John James Chalon (1778-1854) and Alfred Edward Chalon (1780-1860). They came from Geneva and settled in England, both being made R.A.'s. Alfred painted portraits, and was the first to limn the youthful Queen Victoria; John painted landscapes and *genre*.

I quote now from Leslie: "Constable called, according to custom, after the honour that had just been conferred on him, to pay his respects to Sir Thomas Lawrence, who did not conceal from his visitor that he considered him peculiarly fortunate in being chosen an Academician at a time when there were historical painters of great merit on the list of candidates. So kind-hearted a man as Lawrence could have no intention to give pain; but their tastes ran in directions so widely different, and the President, who attached great importance to subject, and considered high art to be inseparable from historical art, had never been led to pay sufficient attention to Constable's pictures to become impressed with their real merit, and there can be no doubt but that he thought the painter of, what he considered, the humblest class of landscape was as much surprised at the honour just conferred on him, as he was himself. Constable was well aware that the opinions of Sir Thomas Lawrence were the fashionable ones; he felt the pain thus unconsciously inflicted, and his reply intimated that he looked upon his election as an act of justice rather than favour."

Constable was in some doubt, after this uncomfortable interview, as to whether he ought to send anything to the Academy at all, but in the end he sent a picture of Hadleigh Castle and a "rich cottage." To quote Leslie again, on the *Hadleigh Castle*: "I witnessed an amusing scene before this picture at the Academy on one of the varnishing days. Chantrey told Constable its foreground was too cold, and taking his palette

from him, he passed a strong glazing of asphaltum all over that part of the picture, and while this was going on, Constable, who stood behind him in some degree of alarm, said to me 'there goes all my dew.' He held in great respect Chantrey's judgment in most matters, but this did not prevent him carefully taking from the picture all that the great sculptor had done for it." This was Sir Francis Chantrey (1781-1841), the sculptor, who left the money for the annual purchase for the nation of works of art, known as the Chantrey Bequest.

It was in this year—1829—that Constable and David Lucas the engraver combined to prepare a publication called *English Landscape*, of which I say something later in this book (page 75). Although only in its infancy, I mention it here because the prospectus and preface, which were probably drawn up then, gave Constable an opportunity to state his case, as against Sir Thomas Lawrence and other critics whom he thought treated him with too little justice or imagination. In the prospectus he wrote: "It is the desire of the author in this publication to increase the interest for, and promote the study of, the rural scenery of England, with all its endearing associations, and even in its most simple localities; of England with her climate of more than vernal freshness, in whose summer skies and rich autumnal clouds, 'in thousand liveries dight,' the observer of nature may daily watch her endless varieties of effect."

In the preface Constable wrote: "In art there are two modes by which men aim at distinction. In the one, by a careful application to what others have accomplished, the artist imitates their works, or selects and combines their various beauties; in the other, he seeks excellence at its primitive source, nature. In the first, he forms a style upon the study of pictures, and produces either imitative or eclectic art; in the second, by a close observation of nature he discovers qualities existing in her which have never been portrayed before, and thus forms a style which is original. The results of the one mode, as they repeat that with which the eye is already familiar, are soon recognised and estimated, while the advances of the artist in a new path must necessarily be slow, for few are able to judge of that which deviates from the usual course, or are qualified to appreciate original studies."

Early in 1830 Sir Thomas Lawrence died, and at the sale of



PLATE 22.

VIEW NEAR SALISBURY. Dated 1829. (6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum

his effects Constable bought one of Sir Joshua's palettes and presented it to the Royal Academy, where it may still be seen. The new P.R.A. was Sir Martin Archer Shee, a portrait painter.

Many of the letters of this year are to David Lucas, respecting the plates on which he was at work. Lucas's foible was to make everything too black, and of one of the proofs Constable says: "It is mighty fine"—this was the *Hadleigh Castle*—"though it looks as if all the chimney sweepers in Christendom had been at work on it and thrown their soot-bags up in the air."

During its preparation *English Landscape* was a great source of anxiety and harassment to Constable, who would have been wiser to have left it alone. There were family cares, too, and Leslie tells us that the artist's dietary irregularities had become in consequence very serious. "I am sadly lonely and don't get well," he wrote to Lucas in March, 1831, adding, "Beechey was here yesterday, and said, 'Why, d—n it, Constable, what a d—d fine picture you are making; but you look d—d ill, and you have got a d—d bad cold!' so that you have evidence *on oath* of my being about a fine picture, and that I am looking ill." This was Sir William Beechey (1753-1839) who, starting life in a very humble manner, was now portrait painter to the King and Royal Family. I wish there was room for some stories of him.

Constable was also acting as Visitor to the Life School at the Academy, and this meant work and thought, for he arranged a special background for each model and delivered an address. While the necessary boughs for the Garden of Eden, in which Eve was posed, were being assembled, his messengers were twice stopped by the police and charged with robbing a gentleman's grounds!

The principal Academy picture in 1831 was *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, which the critics called "Chaos." In the summer died Jackson, the portrait painter and Constable's friend, who, with Wilkie, had been kind in visiting the children either at Charlotte Street or Hampstead. And a little later Northcote died.

In August we find a pleasing and unexpected remark in a letter to Leslie. You remember how bitter Constable was about the suggested National Gallery? Well, he now says, "I looked into the National Gallery yesterday. Carr's Rembrandts are fine and the large Gaspar magnificent; indeed, nowhere does

landscape stand higher than under the roof," as there was only one Rembrandt in the Holwell Carr Bequest in 1831, No. 54—the *Women bathing*. Constable probably was thinking also of one or two of the Angerstein or Beaumont pictures. There were three Gaspard Poussins left by Holwell Carr : Nos. 68, 95 and 98.

In September is this amusing passage, to Leslie, about Varley, the water-colour painter, who had brought a drawing to sell : "He told me how to 'do landscape,' and was so kind as to point out all my defects. The price of the drawing was 'a guinea and a half to a gentleman, and a guinea only to an artist,' but I insisted on his taking the larger sum, as he had clearly proved to me that I was no artist." Varley may have under estimated Constable, but Varley's friend William Blake did not. Looking at a drawing of fir trees in one of Constable's note-books the old visionary said, "Why, this is not drawing, this is inspiration!" "I never knew that before," said Constable, when told about it; "I meant it for drawing."

In September Constable was at the Abbey to see William IV. crowned. The year ended miserably, for the artist was completely crippled by rheumatism, from which he had not recovered when 1832 broke.

CHAPTER XIV.

CRITICS, FAMILY AND SUSSEX.

1832-1836.

At the Academy of 1832 Constable again provoked hostile criticism by the roughness of his *Whitehall Stairs, June 18, 1817*, also known as *The Opening of Waterloo Bridge* [Plate 23], even his old friend Stothard finding nothing better to say for it than "Very unfinished, Sir"; but the extreme methods he had resorted to in order to capture the effect of the moment need not have blinded anyone to the depth of quiet beauty in the *Romantic House, Hampstead*, which he sent with it (now No. 1236 in the National Gallery). It is indeed possible that the *Waterloo Bridge*, with its palette-knife liberties, seriously set back Constable's clock in England. Probably there were too many people who shared Lawrence's view that to make him an R.A.

was a blunder, and this picture would fortify them in that opinion.

I refer to ordinary critics. An extraordinary critic, who carried great guns, John Ruskin, was almost steadily implacable throughout his career. Here is one of his attacks, from the Preface to the second edition of *Modern Painters*: "Unteachableness seems to have been a main feature of his character, and there is corresponding want of veneration in the way he approaches nature herself. His early education and associations were also against him; they induced in him a morbid preference of subjects of a low order. I have never seen any work of his in which there were any signs of his being able to draw, and hence even the most necessary details are painted by him inefficiently. His works are also eminently wanting both in rest and refinement: and Fuseli's jesting compliment is too true; for the showery weather, in which the artist delights, misses alike the majesty of the storm and the loveliness of calm weather; it is great-coat weather and nothing more. There is strange want of depth in the mind which has no pleasure in sunbeams but when piercing painfully through clouds, nor in foliage but when shaken by the wind, nor in light itself but when flickering, glistening, restless and feeble."

Only a complete want of sympathy with Constable's aims and character and ignorance of his career could have led to such an indictment as that; which is by no means corrected by the words that follow: "Yet with all these deductions, his works are to be deeply respected as thoroughly original, thoroughly honest, free from affectation, manly in manner, frequently successful in cool colour, and realising certain motives of English scenery with perhaps as much affection as such scenery, unless when regarded through media of feeling derived from higher sources, is calculated to inspire." Ruskin elsewhere regretted that the admiration of a Constable, "already harmful enough in England," was extending to France!

If Ruskin could not appreciate Constable, Constable had no difficulty in appreciating Ruskin's god, Turner. Indeed, his delight in Turner, both as painter and man, seems to have been constant, mixed with a kind of wonder. He says of his R.A. exhibits in 1835: "Turner's light, whether it emanates from sun or moon, is exquisite"; and again in 1836: "Turner has outdone himself; he seems to paint with tinted steam, so evanescent and

so airy. The public think he is laughing at them, and so they laugh at him in return."

Two events occurred in 1832 to increase Constable's melancholy. One was the serious illness of his eldest daughter, who had scarlet fever, and the other was the death of Archdeacon Fisher. Fisher died in August, and with him passed away another part of the painter's own life, for next to his wife, Fisher was his dearest friend. Leslie he honoured, but Fisher was a closer confidant, adviser and encourager. Two months later another calamity hit him almost as hard—the death of Johnny Dunthorne. "No one," he wrote, "can supply his place with me." It was on Constable's way back from the funeral at East Bergholt, that, passing the Vale of Dedham, a gentleman in the coach remarked, in reply to a comment on its beauty, "Yes, this is Constable's country." The recognition must have rejoiced him; but too many years of depreciation, and the recent reception of the *Waterloo Bridge* at the Academy, had made him nervous, and in relating the incident to Leslie, he adds, "I then told him who I was, lest he should spoil it."

In addition to the *Waterloo Bridge* picture, Constable had at the Academy of 1832 two or three other smaller pictures, among them one called *Moonlight*. Writing to the *Athenæum* as long afterwards as March 10, 1888, Mr. James Chapman, a friend of the painter's, says of this picture: "When I was a student in the Royal Academy I was one day looking at a moonlight picture by Constable, when the painter came up to me and said, 'Well, Chapman, you are studying my moonlight?' I said, 'Yes, I am admiring it.' He then asked me if I had seen the criticism in the *Times* respecting it. I replied I had not. He said, 'They consider it a greater piece of lunacy than ever.' I said, 'No doubt they consider it a good opportunity for attempting an indifferent pun.' 'Well,' he continued, 'now mark what I say. They accuse me of sprinkling my picture with a whitewash brush; but the time will come—I may not live to see it, but you may—when you will find that my pictures will kill all the others near them. These white and glittering spots which they dislike will tone down, and, without losing their purpose, time will harmonise them with the rest.'"

In the first letter of 1833 we have a final reference to the *Waterloo Bridge*: "They," says Constable, referring to the

two Chalons, "are both adopting the palette-knife, which," he adds, "I have laid down, but not till I had cut my own throat with it."

John Chalon, says Constable, whimsically, in his next letter, had done him much good in his profession by spreading the report that he had seen sable brushes in his studio! Another lift-up of a more substantial kind than John Chalon's joke came from the approval of his work, in January, by William Seguiet, "a much greater man than the Duke of Bedford, Lord Westminster, Lord Egremont, the President of the Royal Academy, or even the King himself." Seguiet was the first Keeper of the National Gallery, an artist in a modest way, and an expert and adviser on a large scale. He helped both George IV. and Sir Robert Peel to form their collections, and a rich marriage enabled him to cut a figure as a collector himself.

A visitor whose identity, as too often happens, is buried by Leslie under stars, called on Constable in April, and led to a re-affirmation of Constable's creed that an artist should look at nature rather than at pictures. The caller began by saying genially that as a painter Constable had "lost his way." In reply, says the artist, "I told him that I had, perhaps, other notions of art than picture admirers have in general. I looked on pictures as *things to be avoided*; connoisseurs looked on them as things to be *imitated*, and that, too, with such a deference and humbleness of submission, amounting to a total prostration of mind and original feeling, as must serve only to fill the world with abortions. . . . What a sad thing it is," Constable adds, "that this lovely art is so wrested to its own destruction! Used only to blind our eyes, and to prevent us from seeing the sun shine, the fields bloom, the trees blossom, and from hearing the foliage rustle; while old black, rubbed-out and dirty canvasses take the place of God's own works."

The pictures on which Constable was chiefly working at this time were *The Cenotaph* and *Englefield House*. Lady Morley, seeing the second work on his easel, cheered him immensely by saying, "How fresh, how dewy, how exhilarating!" When it was exhibited at the Academy someone said to Constable that, being merely a picture of a house, it "ought to be in the architectural room." "No," said Constable; "it is the picture of a summer morning, including a house."

As we are now concerned with the year 1833, I may say here that the Victoria and Albert Museum possesses a Constable relic in the shape of a copy of Dr. Watts's *Songs, Divine and Moral*, and two letters from the painter. The first letter is to Master Charles Constable at the Rev. Mr. Pearn's, Folkestone, Kent. It was written for the boy's twelfth birthday on March 27, 1833. I quote some passages: "Charlotte Street, March 22, 1833. . . . I well remember your birthday. I was about the large picture of the Wagon Crossing the River Stour, which went to Paris, and for the painting I received the largest of my gold medals." There is then a reference to the boy's sketches of ships in the Downs. . . . The letter continues: "John has made a wood-cut—the planet Saturn with his belt and satellites—it is his first attempt. . . . I have almost done the large picture of the House [Englefield House]. . . . I have coloured all the little pictures in Dr. Watt's Hymn-book for dear Emily—to be sent to her on her birthday. It looks very pretty."

The second letter is to Emily, who was then only eight, accompanying the copy of Dr. Watts's famous book. On the fly-leaf is written:—

Emily Constable
a birthday present
from her dear Papa
By whom the pictures were painted
on purpose for her
1833.

The six plates were gaily tinted by the fond father, and a little extra picture—a hovering dove—made on the half-title. Against the line, "Let dogs delight to bark and bite," Constable has written "For Landseer."

As to Constable's children, Charles—whose full name was Charles Golding Constable—continued to love ships and became a captain in the East India Company's service, retiring as a Commander when the E.I.C. was absorbed by the Government. He continued also to draw and paint, and left some pictures that are very like his father's. John Charles Constable, the eldest son, born in 1817, was very delicate and lived to be only twenty-four. He died at Jesus College, Cambridge, while studying for the Church. I mention these out of their due order, because of their connection with the South Kensington relic.

There were seven children in all. First, John Charles; then Maria Louisa, or Minna, born in 1819, who lived until 1883 but was never married; then Charles Golding; then Isabel, born in 1823, who became a flower-painter, and, dying in 1888, enriched the National art collections by a bequest of over four hundred of her father's works to the National Gallery and to South Kensington; then poor little Emily, born in 1825, who died at the age of fourteen; then Alfred Abram, born in 1826, who was drowned when twenty-six at Goring-on-Thames, but had already shown enough painting alacrity to exhibit eight pictures at the Royal Academy; and lastly, Lionel Bicknell Constable, born in 1828, who also became a painter and exhibited at the R.A., and who died in 1887. Certain of the National Gallery pictures are joint gifts from himself, associated with his two sisters: *The Cenotaph* and *Flatford Mill*, for example.

In 1834 came more trouble, for first the eldest boy, walking in sleep at school, fell and erysipelas set in; and then Constable himself had another of his serious attacks of rheumatism, so crippling that he was able to send to the Academy only some drawings. In the summer he went with his eldest boy to Arundel, to stay with a namesake, but no relation, Mr. George Constable, a member, I conjecture, of the firm of brewers that is still there; and the scenery of West Sussex delighted him; while at Petworth House he saw the famous collection of pictures formed by Lord Egremont. Indeed, had the artist lived longer it looks as though he would have added West Sussex to the present "Constable Countries"—Suffolk, Salisbury and Hampstead, for he says in a letter of 1836, to his host at Arundel: "I have never seen such scenery as your country affords; I prefer it to any other for my pictures; woods, lanes, single trees, rivers, cottages, barns, mills, and, above all, such beautiful heath scenery." The last picture which Constable painted—on which he was at work at the time of his death—was of Arundel.

In September, 1835, Constable returned to Sussex to stay at Petworth House, where he remained for a fortnight in great happiness. Lord Egremont—George O'Brien Wyndham, the third Earl—was born in 1751, and died in the same year as Constable. He was unmarried, eccentric, benevolent, "blunt without rudeness, caustic without bitterness, and painting was a passion with him." His taste was catholic enough to include

admiration of Leslie and William Blake, Wilkie and Haydon; but among the living he honoured none as he honoured Turner, who had a room always at his service, known as the studio. Some of Turner's most beautiful work was done for Lord Egremont or while he was his guest. Petworth House has several of these pictures and the Tate Gallery even more—including the lovely unfinished *Chichester Canal*. The present owner of Petworth, Lord Leconfield, has preserved the collection with devotion, and the best Turners now hang in his own sitting-room. There are no Constables.

Constable made a number of studies in the neighbourhood. On Fittleworth Common he collected specimens of sand and earth and mosses to preserve as local colour; but I warn readers of this book to be sceptical when they call for refreshment at the Old Swan Inn in that village and are shown the "Constable Room." This room is panelled with oil paintings of the district, some of which are signed Constable; but he is not ours. You will find some authentic Petworth and Midhurst sketches at the British Museum.

Returning to London, Constable devoted the rest of the year to the picture which he thought would in time be considered his greatest—*Salisbury from the Meadows* [Plate 44]. As he was at work on it he wrote to Leslie: "Every gleam of sunshine is withdrawn from me, in the art, at least. Can it be wondered at, then, that I paint continual storms? : 'Tempest o'er tempest roll'd.' Still the darkness is majestic, and I have not to accuse myself of having prostituted the moral feeling of the art."

At that time the artist was busy also on the preparation of a second lecture on landscape which he was to deliver at Hampstead, and which he amplified later into a series for the Royal Institute. The only picture which he sent to the Academy of 1835 was *The Valley Farm; Willy Lott's House*, now No. 327 at the Tate. This was bought by Vernon, the horse-dealer, who saw it on Constable's easel. "Was it painted for anyone in particular?" Vernon asked. "Yes," said Constable, "for a very particular person—the person for whom I have painted all my life." In a letter to Mr. Constable, of Arundel, the artist says: "I have got my picture into a very beautiful state; I have kept my brightness without my spottiness, and I have preserved God Almighty's daylight, which is enjoyed by all mankind

excepting only the lovers of old dirty canvasses, perished pictures at a thousand guineas each, cart grease, tar, and snuff of candle. Mr. —, an admirer of commonplace, called to see my picture, and did not like it at all, so I am sure there is something good in it."

In the summer Constable was at Arundel again, and in September he was busy fitting out his son Charles for a midshipman. "I have had," he writes, "a most anxious and busy time with Charles. I have done all for the best, and I regret all that I have done when I consider that it was to bereave me of this delightfully clever boy, who would have shone in my own profession, and who is now doomed to be driven about on the ruthless sea. It is a sad and melancholy life, but he seems made for a sailor."

Meanwhile John, junior, had been in France, and had now returned, all ready to begin his medical studies.

In March, 1836, we get a glimpse of Samuel Rogers in his house in St. James's Place, backing on the Green Park. Rogers had been the patron of Stothard and Turner—and it might have been either of these who introduced Constable to him, but was more probably Stothard. I say patron, and so it was; but time has readjusted the matter, and no one looking through the banker-poet's verses in their beautiful illustrated form, with steel engravings by Goodall and Finden after those two artists, can deny that it is Turner and Stothard who are keeping Rogers alive. Indeed, some said so at the time; for there is Lady Blessington's joke about the *Italy* in 1830: "It would have been dished but for the plates!" In 1836 Rogers was seventy-two but still had many years to live.

Constable had a delightful morning with the old man, who "thinks I am in right road in my pursuit of landscape. . . . What pictures he has got!" The letter, which was to Leslie, continues: "It was pleasing to see him feed the sparrows while at breakfast, and to see how well they knew him. But he has some melancholy ideas of human nature. He said, 'It is a debt genius must pay to be hated.' I doubt this in general, but there is something like it in nature. I told him if he could catch one of those sparrows, and tie a bit of paper about its neck, and let it off again, the rest would peck it to death for being so distinguished."

And here let me say—as indeed we have now and then seen—

that Constable, for all his mildness and detachment from the world and its jealousies, had at his disposal a fund of causticity not much less formidable than that of Rogers himself. There is, for instance, this criticism of a certain person, who is nameless: "More overbearing meekness I never met with"; and to his milkman he proffered the request that his milk and water should be delivered "in separate cans." Rival artists did not always escape. There is, for example, a sardonic reference to a contemporary artist, whose name Leslie suppresses, whose studies "have wonderful merit, and so has watch-making." I don't know of what portrait-painting colleague it was of whom Constable said: "When he paints a head he takes out all the bones and all the brains." In a moment of bitterness he wrote of himself, concerning the obscurity in which he had been allowed to work—although never allowing it to interfere for a moment with his love of work or belief in his own creed as a painter: "My art flatters nobody by *imitation*, it courts nobody by *smoothness*, it troubles nobody by *petiteness*, it is without either *fal de lal* or *fal de dee*; how then can I hope to be popular?" And of his unsaleableness, at an advanced age, and of collectors who did not make real offers: "All this time the painter is to be had, but they still wait for his quiet departure."

CHAPTER XV.

LECTURES ON LANDSCAPE. DEATH.

1836-1837.

To the Academy of 1836 Constable sent *The Cenotaph*, and on May 26 he delivered the first of his six lectures on "The History of Landscape Painting" at the Royal Institute. Of these little remains but Leslie's recollections, although of one of the previous lectures at Hampstead coherent notes exist. The Royal Institute lectures, therefore, although containing many illuminating things, are broken. I quote a few remarks before passing on to the more ordered survey that had come first.

Here are praises of Claude: "In Claude's landscape all is lovely, all amiable, all is amenity and repose; the calm sunshine of the heart. He carried landscape, indeed, to perfection, that is, *human perfection*. When we speak of the perfection of art, we

must recollect what the materials are with which a painter contends with nature. For the light of the sun he has but patent yellow and white lead, for the darkest shade, umber or soot.

"Brightness was the characteristic excellence of Claude; brightness, independent of colour, for what colour is there here?"—holding up a glass of water.

"The *St. Ursula*, in the National Gallery [No. 30] is probably the finest picture of *middle tint* in the world. The sun is rising through a thin mist, which, like the effect of a gauze blind in a room, diffuses the light equally. There are no large dark masses. The darks are in the local colours of the foreground figures, and in small spots; yet, as a whole, it is perfect in breadth. There is no evasion in any part of this admirable work, every object is fairly painted in a firm style of execution, yet in no other picture have I seen the evanescent character of light so well expressed. . . .

"Claude neglected no mode of study that was calculated to extend his knowledge and perfect his practice. His evenings were passed at the Academy and his days in the fields. . . . Between the ages of forty and sixty he produced most of those works in which are seen his particular attribute, brightness, in its greatest perfection. Some of his best pictures are in the National Gallery—the *Narcissus* [No. 19], painted at forty-four, the *Hagar* [No. 61, see Plate 4], at forty-six, and the *St. Ursula* [No. 30], under sixty."

That is Constable as eulogist. Here we see him as censor: "But the climax of absurdity to which the art may be carried, when led away from nature by fashion, may be best seen in the works of Boucher. Good temper, suavity, and dissipation characterised the personal habits of this perfect specimen of the French School of the time of Louis the Fifteenth, or the early part of the last [XVIIIth] century. His landscape, of which he was evidently fond, is pastoral; and such pastorality! the pastoral of the Opera House. . . . The scenery is diversified with winding streams, broken bridges, and water-wheels; hedge stakes dancing minuets, and groves bowing and curtsying to each other; the whole leaving the mind in a state of bewilderment and confusion, from which laughter alone can relieve it. Boucher told Sir Joshua Reynolds 'that he never painted from the life, for that Nature put him out.'"

Concerning the *Château de Steen* by Rubens, in the National Gallery, which was one of a pair : "When pictures painted as companions are separated, the purchaser of one, without being aware of it, is sometimes buying only half a picture. Companion pictures should never be parted, unless they are by different hands, and then, in general, the sooner they are divorced the better."

The last lecture at the Royal Institute, delivered on July 25, 1836, was more general in scope and individual in manner. I quote a few passages : "It is useful to a painter to have imitators, as they will teach him to avoid everything they do. . . .

"The young painter who, regardless of present popularity, would leave a name behind him, must become the patient pupil of nature. If we refer to the lives of all who have distinguished themselves in art or science, we shall find they have always been laborious. The landscape painter must walk in the fields with a humble mind. No arrogant man was ever permitted to see nature in all her beauty. If I may be allowed to use a very solemn quotation, I would say most emphatically to the student, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'

"The art of seeing nature is a thing almost as much to be acquired as the art of reading the Egyptian hieroglyphics. The Chinese have painted for two thousand years, and have not discovered that there is such a thing as chiaroscuro."

I will select from the Hampstead lecture what seem to me the most salient passages, both for their critical interest and as showing what Constable himself admired. Thus : "In the year 1520, Titian, then in his fortieth year, produced his celebrated picture of the martyrdom of the Dominican Peter, the background of which, although not the model, may be considered as the foundation of all the styles of landscape in every school of Europe in the following century. In this admirable union of history and landscape the scene is on the skirts of a forest, and the time verging towards the close of day, as we may judge from the level and placid movement of the clouds on the deep blue sky, seen under the pendant foliage of the trees which overhang the road. The choice of a low horizon greatly aids the grandeur of the composition; and magnificent as the larger objects and masses of the picture are, the minute plants in the foreground are finished with an exquisite but not obtrusive touch, and even

a bird's nest with its callow brood may be discovered among the branches of one of the trees."

After a reference to the Bolognese School, we come to Domenichino : " The landscape of Domenichino is of the highest order ; although it bears the stamp of composition, yet we recognise the features and hues of nature in every part of it. . . . In the picture of St. Jerome [No. 85 in the National Gallery] the landscape is accessory only, yet most important. The subject of the picture is an aged and decrepit man, dying, attended by the ministers of religion. Through columns and a lofty arch are seen some religious buildings, perhaps often the scene of the dying saint's good works, on a gentle eminence, and overshadowed by a single group of trees. The placid aspect of this simple landscape seems like a requiem to soothe the departing spirit : its effect is like that of solemn music heard from an adjoining apartment. On the serene blue sky, hovering cherubs fill and complete the composition. This noble and pathetic picture, if not so startling as the Peter Martyr, leaves an impression as lasting."

I omit passages on Guido Reni and Nicolas Poussin and come to this : " It was reserved for Paul Bril, who arrived at Rome about the end of the sixteenth century, bringing with him from Antwerp a style peculiarly his own, and less severe than that of the Caracci, to exercise an influence on the art which was destined in the seventeenth century to extend through Bril's pupil, Agostino Tassi, to Claude Lorraine, and to lead to that more minute imitation of particular nature which was the practice of the French and German artists of the time. By thus engrafting a certain portion of Flemish art on that of Italy, a more perfect and beautiful transcript of nature was achieved by the inimitable Claude, and conduced to the production of those exquisite works of his pencil which are wholly without rivalry in the quality which distinguishes them of placid brightness. In his sea-views, his golden sunsets, his wild and romantic shores, and his exquisitely poetic pastoral scenes, the luminous beauties of the painter are so clearly developed as to require less explanation than the qualities of the works already referred to. He has been deemed the most perfect landscape painter the world ever saw, and he fully merits the distinction. The characteristics of his pictures are always those of serene beauty. Sweetness

and amenity reign through every creation of his pencil; but his chief power consisted in uniting splendour with repose, warmth with freshness, and dark with light. Although he was a painter of fairy land and sylvan scenery of the most romantic kind, he is nowhere seen to greater advantage than in his sea-ports, which, while they possess many of the most charming qualities of his more sequestered landscapes, are full of business and bustle."

The Northerners, out of their true place chronologically, are thus treated: "In no other branch of the art is Rubens greater than in landscape; the freshness and dewy light, the joyous and animated character which he has imparted to it, impressing on the level monotonous scenery of Flanders all the richness which belongs to its noblest features. Rubens delighted in phenomena: rainbows upon a stormy sky, bursts of sunshine, moonlight, meteors, and impetuous torrents mingling their sound with wind and wave. . . . In Holland, Rembrandt's *Mill* is of itself sufficient to form an epoch in the art. This is the first picture in which a sentiment has been expressed by chiaroscuro only, all details being excluded. Nor must the names of Ruysdael and Cuyp be overlooked as distinguished from numerous other painters by traits peculiarly their own."

After mentioning the four great English names of the past most to be honoured—Wilson, Gainsborough, Cozens and Girtin—Constable with no little courage returned to an old grievance: "I shall conclude with a brief allusion to a certain set of painters, who, having substituted falsehood for truth, and formed a style mean and mechanical, are termed mannerists. Much of the confusion of opinions in art arising from false taste is caused by works of this stamp, for *if the mannerists had never existed, painting would always have been easily understood*. The education of a professed connoisseur, being chiefly formed in the picture gallery and auction room, seldom enables him to perceive the vast difference between the mannerist and the genuine painter. To do this requires long and close study, and a constant comparison of the art with nature." Where, then, the Hampstead lecture ends is at the precise moment for later critics to introduce the name of Constable and to carry the history of landscape art to our own time, as Sir Charles Holmes has done.

Of Constable's life there is little more to tell. Early in 1837 he was chiefly busy with David Lucas over the mezzotinting of



PLATE 25.

"THE MILL."
*From the painting by Rembrandt,
formerly in the Lansdowne Collection.*

his pictures and was himself engaged on the *Arundel Mill*. In March he succeeded Turner as a Visitor in the Life School.

On the 30th of March Leslie joined him at a R.A. meeting and they walked homewards together. At this point I take up Leslie's narrative: "The most trifling occurrences of that evening remain on my memory. As we proceeded along Oxford Street he heard a child cry on the opposite side of the way; the griefs of childhood never failed to arrest his attention, and he crossed over to the little beggar girl, who had hurt her knee; he gave her a shilling and some kind words, which, by stopping her tears, showed that the hurt was not very serious, and we continued our walk. Some pecuniary losses he had lately met with had disturbed him, but more because they involved him with persons disposed to take advantage of his good feelings than from their amount. He spoke of these with some degree of irritation, but turned to more agreeable subjects, and we parted at the west end of Oxford Street, laughing. I never saw him again alive.

"The whole of the next day he was busily engaged finishing his picture of Arundel Mill and Castle. One or two of his friends who called on him saw that he was not well, but they attributed this to confinement and anxiety with his picture, which was to go in a few days to the Exhibition. In the evening he walked out for a short time on a charitable errand connected with the Artists' Benevolent Fund. He returned about nine o'clock, ate a hearty supper, and feeling chilly had his bed warmed, a luxury he rarely indulged in. It was his custom to read in bed; between ten and eleven he had read himself to sleep, and his candle as usual was removed by a servant. Soon after this his eldest son, who had been at the theatre, returned home, and while preparing for bed in the next room, his father awoke in great pain and called to him."

An hour or so afterwards he died, the doctor stating that probably had he been sent for sooner he might have put things right. That was on March 31, 1837.

The Constable tomb is in the old burial-ground at Hampstead, south of the church. You turn sharp to the left as you enter the churchyard and keep by the wall. The grave is at the first angle with the next wall. John Constable, his wife and four children are buried there, and the names of the other three children are inscribed on the stone, too. It is a melancholy structure.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSTABLE IN THE PUBLIC GALLERIES.

I.—VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM.

Constable was a tireless worker, as indeed an ecstatic worshipper of English weather must be, with such varieties offered to him; and his pictures and sketches are to be found in many collections. But fortunately for his admirers and students he is represented in London's public galleries more fully than any other artist except Turner. In the National Gallery there are more than twenty of his works. At the Tate there are twenty, and one on loan. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there are two Constable rooms which illustrate at once his vigour and his range. On the stairs to the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy—which although always open and always free is too rarely visited—there are some superb studies, and in the gallery itself two large pictures. At the Guildhall is a very painty *Crossing the Ford*, bequeathed by Charles Gassiot, and at the Wembley Exhibition this year (1924) there were the superb, great, green *Stratford Mill*, with the man and children fishing, belonging to Lord Swaythling, and a dashing sketch for one of the *Salisbury Cathedrals*, a lovely, ghostly thing, belonging to Mr. T. W. Bacon.

In the Print Room of the British Museum there are four portfolios of water-colours and pencil drawings, more than a hundred in all. Among the most interesting of the water-colour sketches are some of Petworth and district, made towards the end of the artist's life. A fine one of Tillington church, on the edge of Petworth Park, is memorable, and there are several of Cowdray. Among the seascapes are drawings of Folkestone and Littlehampton: very fresh and strong. One of the best of the pencil drawings is the façade of University College, Oxford. One of the portfolios contains many notes for portraits, chiefly of young women and children. There are also some oil studies of flowers and birds. Among the sketches are two designs for an illustration to Gray's "Elegy," in which an old man leans on a tombstone. Stoke Poges church is to the left.

The Constables at South Kensington are more instructive than those at the National Gallery because they comprise finished pictures, large studies, small studies (often his



PLATE 26.

AUTUMNAL SUNSET. (74 x 144 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

most characteristic and inspired work) water-colours and drawings.

Among the finished pictures is the *Salisbury Cathedral* of 1823 [Plate 42]; among the large studies are the first versions of *The Hay Wain* and *The Leaping Horse* [Plates 16 and 48], while there are very many smaller ones.

The South Kensington Constables come chiefly from the painter's daughter Isabel, who either gave or bequeathed her large collection of paintings, studies and drawings, hundreds strong. The few others come from the Sheepshanks Gift, the Vaughan Bequest and the Chauncy Hare Townshend Bequest.

John Sheepshanks (1787-1863) was a Leeds cloth manufacturer with a large fortune and a passion for the works of the British artists of his own time, principally Landseer, Clarkson Stanfield and Constable's biographer, Leslie. Most of these he bought from the easel; his Constables he acquired after the painter's death. Sheepshanks did not wait to die before being munificent, but gave his collection to the nation in 1857, expressing the wish that it might be accessible to the public also on Sundays: a wish not gratified till he had long been in the grave. The collection fills three or four rooms in the Victoria and Albert Museum, among the most valuable works being the Turners, the Constables and an Old Crome or two. But the best Old Crome—No. 232—comes from another source. There are also some good Wilsons, and some Peter de Wints in oil that, one feels, might not have been as true and fine and big as they are, but for Constable's rivalry, if not influence. De Wint was Constable's junior by eight years.

There are too many of Constable's works at South Kensington for it to be practical here to mention all, but I must say something of a few. The first of the large finished pictures is No. 33: the lovely *Salisbury Cathedral*, with the pale sun on its white stone, of which I give a reproduction [Plate 42]. Here we see Constable paying more than his usual attention to detail. "I have not," he wrote to Archdeacon Fisher, while he was painting it, "flinched at the windows, buttresses," etc. The picture was in the Academy of 1823 and was "much approved." This is the most peaceful of all the *Salisbury Cathedrals* that Constable painted. No writer could have called it "chaos," a term applied to one at least of the other versions, while Fuseli might feel safe

from rain for at least an hour. It is the only picture that I can recall in which the artist allowed any mere pettiness to intrude, if the natural arch formed by the trees in the foreground may be thus described. Symmetry of any kind he usually either did not find or disdained.

No. 1631, another finished picture, has great charm, and here I would say of this South Kensington Constable room, that the oftener you go there the more satisfying and more stimulating it becomes. One feels that if Constable could have maintained a gallery during his lifetime, to which people could (if they would) pay frequent visits, he would not to have had to wait for recognition. I do not suggest that at first sight it is impossible to love this painter; but his work—its truth and beauty and open-air freshness—grows on the spectator. The effect of the room is cumulative, too: you are excited by it in detail and in the mass; and the next time you go there you find that a sub-conscious memory is continually twitching you this way and that to the spot where—surely—there was something that had specially attracted you. And each time you will find it! There are but few finished pictures; most of the work here is swift impressionism.

No. 1631, *The Cottage in the Cornfield*, is a masterpiece of landscape: the cornfield, the shadows, the distant trees, the sky over all, the arrangement. The middle plane of yellow certainly was a product of "Ruysdael House"! Note the effect of the poppies and the donkey's fillet of red. Perhaps some day, when more space can be found to give the works on these crowded walls a chance (to-day they are grievously huddled, often to mutual disadvantage, and certainly always to Constable's), this picture will be allowed a screen to itself.

Nos. 36 and 38 are curiously quiet scenes for Constable. The transparency of the air in the *Water Meadows*, No. 38 [Plate 45], is complete. Not a sign of life but that of water, grass and leaf.

Both the two great studies for *The Leaping Horse*, the finished picture being in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, and *The Hay Wain*, the finished picture being in the National Gallery, were bequeathed by Henry Vaughan (1809-1899), who did so much to enrich the public collections of the art of his day. But neither picture did he buy in Constable's time—he was too young when Constable died. Vaughan, I might say, the son of

a wealthy hat manufacturer, was a friend of Turner and one of the founders of the Burlington Fine Arts Club. Both studies are alive, both sparkle, and both, to my mind, are superior to the finished work. *The Leaping Horse* is peculiarly direct and forceful, and full of the noise of canal life. *The Hay Wain* shows a change of mind, for the children near the dog were taken out. They fulfil Constable's wish, which I have quoted earlier, that his work should contain "light, dews, breezes, bloom and freshness."

Of the small oil studies on millboard, in which the painter recorded momentary impressions of light and shade; a cumulus cloud, a sunset, a scud of rain, a rainbow, a storm, or any very attractive turn of road or curve of hill: of these, in which South Kensington is so rich, and which I personally most covet, I can mention only the most striking. Let me name first No. 144, *Spring* [Plate 2], the tiny panel with a brisk sky in motion, which is perhaps the most wonderful thing in the room and must still make all sensitive artists gasp. But, although it was engraved by David Lucas and published during the painter's lifetime, he either was never asked to sell it or did not consent. The windmill is that, near East Bergholt, in which Constable as a youth got his knowledge of windmilling. I reproduce the picture in colour.

I think I should put as next in quality the little placid masterpiece, No. 123, *View at Hampstead Heath*. No one before—and most of the great Dutchmen had been trying—and no one since, has painted a better landscape than this; no one ever got so much country into $7\frac{7}{8}$ inches of canvas by $9\frac{3}{4}$. It is a little like Crome, but it stands alone. For a contrast to No. 123, look at No. 135, a terrific sketch.

Reverting to the Hampstead picture, we see that Constable, like Corot, found his subjects close at hand. Just as Corot would leave his house at Ville D'Avray and set up his easel on the edge of one of the two neighbouring pools, so Constable, in his Hampstead days, would leave Well Walk and in a few moments find his subject. Could he revisit Hampstead to-day there would still be the Heath for him, and the clump of firs, now known as "Constable's Knoll," and many a house untouched; but when he looked outwards in any direction he would be baffled by red brick. Look what a splendid thing he made of *The Grove, Hampstead*, No. 137!

I think that if I were allowed to take away three only of these small studies—and no questions asked—my third choice would be No. 153, *View near Salisbury*, which I give in colour [Plate 22].

I now enumerate a few others, with a brief comment.

No. 330, *Weymouth Bay*. Very French and full of the worst weather. Indeed, this picture would have driven Fuseli from the Exhibition in terror. I say "French" because whereas the English artists who followed Constable seized rather upon his gaiety and open-air freshness, the French were more affected by his sombre passages. But all French art is melancholy.

No. 132, *Dedham Vale*. "O silver, silver green!"

No. 134. This must have seemed incredibly modern to those that saw it. Can such a red field have ever got into paint before? [Plate 6].

No. 325. Here is another masterpiece of impressionism [Plate 33].

No. 125. Hampstead again, painted with colours borrowed from Turner.

No. 166. Very French [Plate 8].

No. 155. A lovely evening effect. Painted at Hove, with Highdown Hill in the distance. Turner's palette again [Plate 27].

No. 150. The essential Constable country: Stoke-by-Nayland [Plate 7].

Nos. 148, 782, 783: Brighton coast impressions. No. 783 [Plate 15] has both Whistler and Boudin in it.

Nos. 149 and 158 [Plate 49]. Windmills in Sussex, in 1824.

No. 163. *Old Sarum*. As impressive as a "Last Judgment."

Nos. 153 [Plate 22], 167 and 157 [Plate 35], all in one frame. Two are sky and tree scenes purely, and both glorious; the other is a Salisbury sketch, intensely vivid. Constabular points of red.

No. 587. "Peace, perfect peace" [Plate 29].

No. 1630. "Green thoughts."

No. 137. "Admiral's House" at Hampstead with a rainbow over it. The art of making The Grove romantic!

No. 321. Constable's own country again. This is painted from the high ground, near Stoke. Note the placing of the white sail on the river.

No. 130. The label questions this, but of course it is East Bergholt church: the west end, where the tower was begun and then left just a gateway high.



PLATE 27.

STUDY NEAR THE COAST, BRIGHTON—EVENING. (7½ x 9½ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

No. 127. A perfect evening. The rooks very corroborative [Plate 26].

Nos. 335, 339 [Plate 41], 334, 591 [Plate 14], all in one frame. An excellent example of Constable's range.

There are several frames of pencil drawings, some most beautiful. Note Nos. 251 [Plate 60], 262, 353 [Plate 59], 609, 617 [Plate 58], 624 [Plate 61], and 824.

In the Constable water-colour room at South Kensington one has a shock—but it is a shock of delighted surprise, proceeding from the freshness of the work hanging there. The artist must have used very excellent materials, for although a hundred years have passed, these vivacious transcripts of earth and sky, air and water, might have been painted yesterday. I reproduce two as nearly in facsimile as our methods permit, and you will see how strong and gay they are [Plates 24 and 28]. The water-colours on view on the walls of the room set apart for them are, I should point out, only a small portion of the whole collection, the others being kept in portfolios accessible to students.

From Constable's water-colours, which, however, he made rather as memoranda than as finished work, for he was essentially a painter in oils, it is interesting to pass to the rooms where the whole development of English water-colour is passed in review, from the Sandbys to D. Y. Cameron. And before leaving the Victoria and Albert Museum I advise a détour to the rooms in which the Ionides Collection may be found. There is a picture there which, but for Constable, might, one feels, never have been painted: the landscape, No. 55, by Rousseau. The Collection has *An old Suffolk Mill*, No. 77, which is attributed to Constable, but does not look like him.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONSTABLE IN THE PUBLIC GALLERIES.

II.—NATIONAL GALLERY.

At the time of writing—the summer of 1924—the National Gallery Constables are twenty-three, of which ten are reproduced in this book; while one more—a great stormy Salisbury—is on loan from Lord Ashton. Taking the pictures in the

numerical order of the catalogue, we come first to *The Cornfield* or *Country Lane*, No. 130 [Plate 47], which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1826 and found no purchaser. After the painter's death a little association of gentlemen, friends and admirers of the artist, clubbed together to present it to the nation. That was in 1837. It is strange that during the painter's lifetime no one wanted it. This picture reminds one a little of Gainsborough's *Market Cart* in the same Gallery, but it is more free, more original. Much colour must have gone from the corn. I think of it as being among the painter's less remarkable works.

No. 1207 is the famous *Hay Wain* of 1821 [Plate 17], given by Henry Vaughan in 1886. It now hangs near Turner's *Frosty Morning* and *Crossing the Brook*, and on the same wall as Old Crome's *Mousehold Heath*, so that the Muse of Landscape should be proud indeed of her ministrants in this room. The main difference between Constable and the other great landscape painters here is Constable's effort to catch the sound as well as the movement of the moment. Turner's *Crossing the Brook* is essential placidity. There is a hush in the *Frosty Morn*, a hush in Crome's *Mousehold Heath* and *Moonrise on the Yare*; tranquillity has been captured. But in *The Hay Wain* you feel the breeze, hear the splashing horses, are conscious of the twittering of birds. Also it is characteristic England.

To my eye *The Hay Wain* is far less revolutionary than other Constable's works that hang near it at the National Gallery, but in Paris in 1824 it led, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, to intense excitement among artists and critics, and it struck the death-blow to the old conventional landscape painting. Henceforth there was to be a steady effort to capture nature's expressions, where heretofore her features alone had been depicted. The National Gallery contains no directly derivative work, but it is easy to believe that certain French landscapes that are there would be different had not *The Hay Wain* come first: the little Rousseau, No. 2635, in particular. Look also at the Daubigny, the Diaz, and the Boudin. Think also of the whole range of Barbizon landscape and then recall the warning of the Paris critics, to the effect that the influence of *The Hay Wain* would be the ruin of French art, since no true beauty or style was to be found in it!

No. 1236, *The Salt Box*, is one of the gayest and freshest of

the Hampstead scenes, probably painted in 1821 and never finding a purchaser. Miss Isabel Constable gave it in 1888. The green of the foreground may be a little crude, but the sky and distant hills are superb.

In No. 1245, painted in 1811, we find more direct or easily-distinguished foreshadowings of Barbizon than in the epoch-making *Hay Wain* of thirteen years later. This picture also Constable did not succeed in selling, and Miss Isabel Constable presented it in 1888. It was probably too sombre for popular taste, but how rich! I reproduce it here [Plate 9].

No. 1246, *A House at Hampstead*. To-day this is known as "Admiral's House," only a few yards from the Round Pond, while the little cottage next it is Grove Lodge, now the home of a famous novelist. I always seem to see Corot in this picture, which, with the other neighbouring Constables, make George Morland and James Holland, hanging near, very tame. The work, a most delightful one, and almost as fresh to-day as when painted, did not sell, and was presented by Miss Isabel Constable in 1888.

No. 1272, *The Cenotaph*. This represents the memorial to Sir Joshua Reynolds which Sir George Beaumont set up in a grove in Coleorton Park, in Leicestershire, with lines by Wordsworth graven on it. Constable made his drawings for the picture in 1823 and painted it in 1833-36. It is not very characteristic.

No. 1273, *Flatford Mill*. How many times Constable painted Flatford Mill, his own early home, who shall say? This picture is dated 1817, and it was hardly "modern" at all and in no sense rebellious. To my mind the composition is less inevitable than usual, and the water in the stream seems to lack luminosity. The pick of the work is the water meadows through the trees.

No. 1275. Another Hampstead view, painted in 1823. This picture, together with Nos. 1272 and 1273, and others at South Kensington and the Tate, were presented in 1888 by Miss Isabel Constable as the gift of her late brother and sister, Lionel and Maria Constable. Perhaps the charge that Constable could be too painty is proven by the foreground.

No. 1814, *Salisbury Cathedral* [Plate 44]. It is not easy to keep accurate trace of the various Salisbury Cathedrals that Constable painted. This picture might be a study for the big

Salisbury Cathedral now on loan to the National Gallery by Lord Ashton; but the rainbow is lacking. Together they show how Constable caught and held atmospherical moments. Lord Ashton's picture would have sent Fuseli to the cellar in a panic. In all paint I know of no such a threatening storm.

The next picture numerically, No. 1815, shows another storm, representing a scene noticed by Constable at Redhill, on his way either to Brighton from London or on the return journey, and set down from notes directly he reached his easel. The date is after his first Brighton visit, in 1824. The wind can be heard as you look at this sketch.

No. 1817 is an actual Brighton sketch and is dated August 20, 1824.

With No. 1819 we are in Suffolk again, at Stoke-by-Nayland. This is very French, visibly full of the seeds of Barbizon, and it would be daring even to-day. It is one of my special favourites.

The next, No. 1820, is Essex—one of the many treatments of Dedham. The year is 1822.

In No. 1821 we find hints of *The Cornfield*, No. 130. The year of that picture—1826—and this may be the same. The scene was probably the Stour valley. This too is very French. Diaz, Rousseau, Daubigny and Dupré are all foreshadowed.

In No. 1822 we find Dedham Vale [Plate 32], and again a foretaste of Barbizon. Let me mention here that Nos. 1814 to 1822 formed part of the bequest of Henry Vaughan, whose collection of English pictures of the early half of the nineteenth century enriched the National Gallery in 1900; he had given *The Hay Wain* during his lifetime.

We now come—with No. 2649—to the first of the eight Constables from the bequest of the late George Salting, that fine and catholic appreciator of what was most charming and most authentic in art, who died in 1910, leaving his pictures to the National Gallery, his porcelain and miniatures to South Kensington, and his drawings and prints to the British Museum. No. 2649 is another view of Stoke-by-Nayland, and in point of time is the earliest work here, being painted in or about 1806. The style is quieter than in later years; more ordinary. Step away to see how the trees stand out. The sky is lucid; the distant trees are exact. Nothing could be much more different in the work of one man than the next picture, No. 2651, a sketch for a



PLATE 28.

WINDMILL AND SHEEP. (5 x 8 in.)
From the water colour in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Salisbury Cathedral [Plate 43], which has all modern painting in it. The vigour is terrific. One can understand the recoil of timid minds from such an innovator, such a rebel. Yet they had but to recede to a safe distance for all to be well! The spots of red are dazzling. Look at the light on the boat; look into the recesses of the trees. Above it hangs an equally bold effort of impressionism, Turner's sketch for *Walton Bridges*, No. 2680, and the comparison of the styles is interesting.

The year of No. 2652, *Weymouth Bay* [Plate 11], that glorious thing, is probably 1816, when Constable was at Osmington on his honeymoon. As I have said earlier in this book, if the picture were now hung anonymously in a mixed exhibition it would be a puzzle indeed to date it. It has one of the most splendid skies that pigment ever achieved.

The date of the next work, No. 2653, *Malvern Hall* [Plate 10]—1809—would probably be also a surprise to most visitors to any such exhibition in which it was unnamed. No one, not even Constable himself, was painting quite like this a hundred and fifteen years ago. Indeed, they are hardly painting like it yet; but I hope they will. The peace of this picture is profound. How it can fail to draw excited enthusiasm is a mystery.

The next, No. 2654, is the smallest here—only 5 inches by 7—but how big! The precision and decision of it are superb. Gainsborough, in No. 1283, has the same subject—Dedham Vale—but treated how differently! Here Constable seems to have no predecessor, whereas the Gainsborough is direct from Hobbema.

Constable's portraits are not always very attractive, but No. 2655, the head of his wife [Plate 12] has extraordinary charm and interest, and not the less so through our knowledge of her early death and her husband's grief and loneliness. No one unacquainted with her history could see this picture without realising two things: one, that a loving hand painted it, and the other, that there was pathos in the air. Some of the touches in the dress are deft and delicate in the manner of Hogarth, who may be studied in the same room. The picture is called Mrs. Constable: but she was still Miss Bicknell when it was painted, in July, 1816, three months before their marriage.

No. 2656 is one of Constable's many studies of sky and sea. On the back is written, "Painted at Brighton, Sunday, Jan. 1, 1826, from 12 till 2 p.m. Fresh breeze from S.S.W." This tells

us that Constable did not share the strict Sabbatarianism of Sir George Beaumont, who would not even open a portfolio of prints on the Day of Rest. It is also interesting as being one of Constable's very few winter works. I think of this as one of his masterpieces.

No. 2657, *The Windmill* [Plate 50], is not dated, but it is obviously a Southdown mill, and therefore was painted on one of the Brighton visits, which began in 1824. I first saw it in Mr. Salting's rooms in the Thatched House Club, where it lay with its face to the wall among Corots and far too many other beautiful works, all hidden and dusty.

While in the National Gallery it is interesting to look for the oak in the acorn : that is to say, to see what foretastes of Constable the older painters suggest. To do this thoroughly we must go first to the Dutch rooms, in spite of Constable's admiration for Claude and Gaspard Poussin and Wilson. First among the forerunners and possible influences I should put Jacob Ruysdael and Philips Koninck ; and that Constable should be more like the Dutchman than like Claude and Gaspard Poussin and the great Italianised Englishman, is natural, since he adhered with such sincerity to nature, and the physical characteristics of Holland and of Suffolk have many similarities. I am inclined to think that four of the Ruysdaels have more of Constable than any other works : the *Watermills*, No. 986, the *Shore at Scheveningen*, No. 1390, with its salt air and moving sky, the *View near Haarlem*, No. 2561, where the sun shines on the cornfield from an angry sky, and, perhaps most of all, the great landscape, No. 990, with all the Constable ingredients in it : church spire, cloud and sun, windmill, cornfield, and omnipresent light. It was not for nothing that Archdeacon Fisher called Constable's home "Ruysdael House," and there is a curious symmetry in the circumstance that when Constable heard of Fisher's death he found consolation in copying one of Ruysdael's works.

Turner, who was not given to admire other painters, also paid homage to Ruysdael and invented a harbour in his honour. *Port Ruysdael* is the title of one of his pictures.

Koninck's vast landscape, No. 836, with all its mileage and sky and weather, must have thrilled the handsome miller had he seen it, and certainly the Hobbemas too. Hobbema's greatest English follower was Old Crome, while Patrick Nasmyth was

his most faithful one; but the young Constable could not have studied him without profit. Look at the *Village with Watermills*, No. 832. I would draw attention also to Paul Potter's *Cattle in a Stormy Landscape*, painted in 1647, which seems curiously to prepare the way for Constable's grim veracity, and has an effect of which he was very fond—the light on the silvery underside of the leaves flung up by the wind.

We have, while at the National Gallery, the opportunity of looking at three or four pictures which Constable admired and which he used as illustrations in his lectures on landscape to the Academy students. Of Claude, who remained to the end his god of idolatry, we see elsewhere in this book what he glowingly said more than once.

Constable went on, in the same lecture, in which Claude is eulogised, to praise the landscapes of Sebastian Bourdon (1616-1671) which he described as "all poetry: visionary, romantic, abstracted," drawing attention to No. 64.

We have seen that he admired Rubens' *Château de Steen*, and here we may study and admire it too: No. 66. So also the fine landscape by Gaspard Poussin, No. 31, of which Constable wrote to Leslie, "the large Gaspar is magnificent."

Claude's *Hagar*, No. 61, which was the first Old Master that Constable had the chance to gloat over when Sir George Beaumont shewed it to him in the early 'seventeen-nineties, we have seen him copying. Among the Old Masters and copies of them that were dispersed at Constable's sale in 1838, I find a copy of *The Mill*, by Rembrandt. This is that picture, probably the finest landscape ever painted, which Lord Lansdowne, a Trustee of the National Gallery, sold to America some few years ago. I give a reproduction of it [Plate 25], among the Constables, just by way of showing what these two sons of millers could do with their own material. Constable also had a copy of a mill by Ruysdael, which I take to be *Landscape with Windmills* in the Dulwich Gallery, No. 168, for we know him both to have admired and copied that work. As it is always interesting to know what pictures painters collect, I mention a few of Constable's originals: three Ruysdaels, three Van Goyens, two Wilsons, two Guardis, and a Watteau which had belonged to Reynolds. But the catalogue of 1838 is an incomplete guide, for Constable had sold a lot of his "Old Men," as he called them, in 1833.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONSTABLE IN THE PUBLIC GALLERIES.

III.—THE TATE GALLERY AND OTHER COLLECTIONS.

The Constables at the Tate are many, and I mention them in their numerical order. The first is No. 327, *Willy Lott's House*, or *The Valley Farm*, the picture which Constable worked upon so lovingly in 1835 and exhibited at the R.A. that year. (See Chapter xiv.) Willy Lott's house was still standing in the spring of this year, 1924, but it looked near its end. Willy lived there for more than eighty years.

No. 1065, *Sketch of a Cornfield*, very French in feeling, painted about 1816. It is reproduced in this book [Plate 30].

No. 1066, *Barnes Common*, painted about 1805, and having little that is distinctive.

No. 1235 is a view of Golding Constable's house, now no longer standing, where John Constable was born. Another version, at South Kensington, is reproduced in this book [Plate 1].

No. 1237 is one of the many Hampstead views, painted about 1821; very typical, and reproduced in this book [Plate 36].

No. 1244 is a study of Gillingham bridge, in Dorset, made while on a visit to Archdeacon Fisher in 1823. Not one of the artist's best.

No. 1274, *The Glebe Farm*. This was painted in 1827, and the church is that of Langham, near Dedham, where Bishop Fisher had been vicar. The artist has arranged the details to suit himself, making the bluff on which the church stands much steeper than it is, and probably introducing the pool from his own consciousness, for it is no longer to be found.

No. 1823 is a study for the same work. Over it hangs a Patrick Nasmyth, who was eleven years younger than Constable and died before him, and who never attempted to do more than perpetuate the Dutch traditions. The contrast is interesting.

No. 1276 is a sea piece, and was painted probably in 1820. It has a fine openness.

No. 1813 is another Hampstead view, painted about 1823. A typical shower in progress. See the reproduction [Plate 37].

No. 1816 is another Stour valley scene, with French qualities. The boy's waistcoat supplies the note of red which the painter so valued. The date is about 1811.

No. 1818 was painted three years earlier, at Epsom, where Constable had a friend named Digby Neave.

No. 1824, painted about 1812, though so small, is notable for its expanse of sky and country, the sky really overhead.

No. 2658, the first of the Salting pictures at the Tate, is perhaps a little too heavy; and No. 2660, the Dell at Helmingham, the seat of the Dysarts, is perhaps overpainted. The date was 1830. Mr. Salting seems to have sold it and then repurchased it. The next picture, *Dedham Mill*, No. 2661, dating from about 1827, might be thought to be a little overpainted too.

No. 2662, a Cumberland sketch made in 1806, has a perfect placidity, while No. 2663, *Dedham Valley*, painted still earlier, is unusually cold.

The Tate also has a water-colour study of trees, No. 3155, which I reproduce [Plate 55].

Two other pictures are in the catalogue: No. 2659, *Trees near Hampstead Church*, now lent to a provincial gallery; and No. 2650, *Yarmouth Jetty*, about which the authorities are doubtful. It looks like a Constable to me.

While at the Tate one should seek certain other pictures which may be said to be in the Constable tradition or which are the work of landscape painters of wholly independent genius. There is a fine Peter de Wint, a recent acquisition, No. 3823, which proves how vigorous and individual this other Eastern-county artist and chiefly a worker in water-colours—De Wint was from Lincolnshire—could be in oil. De Wint, as I have said, was eight years younger than Constable, and there is little evidence that he owed anything to him. Nor does one see any kinship, beyond that of two nature-lovers, in Cotman's *Drop Gate*, No. 3632. Cotman, who was also of the Eastern counties, coming from Norwich, was by six years Constable's junior. But when we look at Sam Bough's *Surrey Common*, No. 1936, I think we are on Constable's high road. Farther I will not travel, but it would be a pleasant journey.

Constable's Diploma picture for the Royal Academy is merely called "Landscape," and is another treatment of a lock, with

Dedham Church in the very centre of the composition. It hangs in the Diploma Gallery, with the landscapes of other R.A.'s not far away and one by Callcott, a Morlandy affair, as its pendant. The Diploma landscapes as a whole are indifferent things, Gainsborough's and Turner's being now as black almost as night. Constable's is full of weather, a heavy shower being actually in progress. It is strong and true, but a little over-painted: like so many Diploma pictures, not quite its artist's best. By a gift, however, from Mrs. Dawkins, the Diploma has *The Leaping Horse*, that masterpiece; and I wish it were hung where it could be better seen. This is one of Constable's most sincere and revolutionary canvasses. The Diploma Gallery also has some oil sketches by Constable, all very attractive.

CHAPTER XIX.

"MR. CONSTABLE'S ENGLISH LANDSCAPE."

In 1829 Constable entered upon an undertaking which must be regarded as actually a phase of his artistic expression, for, though it was a translation of his painting into mezzotint, his inception of the work and intimate personal association with it as it progressed at the hands of the engraver, his own choice of the subjects and his constant supervision of the black-and-white interpretation on the copper, with the changes in pictorial detail, in aspects of sky and land, justify the title of "Mr. Constable's English Landscape."

For this work he found in David Lucas the ideal engraver, one who knew the English countryside at first hand, for, before he was taken as apprentice by S. W. Reynolds, the famous mezzotint engraver, he had worked in Northamptonshire as a farm hand, and had been accustomed to sketch from nature while looking after the cattle. Little wonder, then, that his mezzotint-scraper found its most congenial subject-matter in landscape, especially inspiring in Constable's fresh and natural pictures.

It was through Reynolds falling ill while he was engraving *The Lock* that the association of Constable and Lucas came about, and led to the young engraver, who was twenty-seven when in 1829 he commenced work on the "English Landscape," making under the painter's eye those twenty-two brilliant mezzotint plates which are, in the words of Sir Frederick Wedmore, who catalogued them enthusiastically, "among the most prized classics of the Engraver's Art."

The work dragged through four years and cost Constable much vexation of spirit, much unremunerative work and much money. How it all tried him we may read in the many petulant letters he wrote on the subject, chiefly, of course, to the meek and patient Lucas, whose ill-health and domestic troubles frequently delayed unavoidably the work's progress. Constable valued Lucas very highly. "His great urbanity and integrity," he wrote of him, "are only equalled by his skill as an engraver." Mr. H. S. Theobald, K.C., possessed most of the correspondence, together with his splendid collection of choice and rare proofs of the "English Landscape," which is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, a gift from Mr. Charles Charrington.

Constable published the twenty-two plates of the "English Landscape" in 1833, and the following is one of the various prospectuses he issued :—

Mr. Constable's English Landscape.

JUST PUBLISHED.

A Collection of

TWENTY LANDSCAPES

To which is added a Frontispiece and Vignette,

Price FIVE GUINEAS the Set ;

They are principally intended to mark

THE PHÆNOMENA OF THE CHIAR 'OSCURO OF NATURE.

Engraved in Mezzotinto by

DAVID LUCAS,

From Pictures painted by

JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A.

This work is published in Five Numbers at One Guinea each, either of which may be had singly ; the whole consists of Twenty-two Plates, with title and other introductory pages. The greater number of these Engravings are from the pictures exhibited by MR. CONSTABLE, at the Royal Academy, during the last few years : the plates vary in length from nine to twelve inches. They have been engraved entirely under the inspection of the Author, and completed to his most sanguine expectations. To insure the whole of the impressions being perfect, they have been printed at the house of the Engraver only.

The subjects of all the plates are taken from real places ; and are meant particularly to characterise the Scenery of England ; in their selection, and partiality may have been given to those of a particular neighbourhood. Some of them, may be interesting, as the scenes of many of the marked historical events of our middle ages.

The Author, if he may venture to do so, entertains a hope that this work, may find a place, in the portfolio of the Artist, and be an acquisition to the Amateur ; and from the almost universal esteem in which the Arts are now held, he trusts it may prove generally acceptable.

A very limited number of Copies only are taken on Indian Paper.—PRICE TEN GUINEAS.

SUBJECTS OF THE PLATES.

1. Paternal House and Grounds of the Author.
2. Spring, East Bergholt Common, Hail Squalls.
3. Sunset, Peasants returning homeward.
4. Noon, the West End Fields, Hampstead.
5. Yarmouth Pier, Norfolk, Morning Breeze.
6. Summer Morning. The Vale of Dedham.
7. Summer Evening, a Homestead Cattle Reposing.
8. Dell in the Woods of Helmingham Park.
9. Hampstead Heath, sand pits, Stormy Noon.
10. A Water Mill, Dedham, Essex.
11. A Sea Beach, Brighton, heavy surf.
12. River Stour, Suffolk, near Flatford Mill.
13. Head of a Lock on the Stour.
14. Mound of the City of Old Sarum.
15. A Summerland, Rainy Day, Ploughmen.
16. Stoke Church, near Leyland Suffolk.
17. Barges, on the Stour, Suffolk.
18. Weymouth Bay, Dorset, Tempestuous Evening.
19. Summer Afternoon, Sunshine after a shower.
20. The Glebe Farm, Girl at a spring.
21. Hadleigh Castle, the Nore.
22. Vignette, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON :

Published by, and to be had of, Mr. Constable, 35, Charlotte Street,
Fitzroy Square, of D. Colnaghi & Son, Pall Mall East ; and of all the
principal Printsellers.

1833.

The publication was financially a failure. Yet proofs of the twenty-two plates, in which the engraver, with his wonderful vividness and luminosity of effect, is seen at his best, are now very highly prized by many collectors, and in fine and brilliant impressions they are really beautiful things. The various Trial Proofs show extraordinary differences, and some of the earlier ones might lead one to suppose that Lucas had deliberately over-emphasised his blacks and obscured the details; but in later proofs one may see the sensitiveness of his mezzotint-scraper.

In the British Museum there is a complete collection, with many variations in the Trial Proofs. In Mr. Henry Percy Horne's very choice and interesting collection are several of Constable's own touched proofs. Two, *Spring* and *Noon*, are reproduced here [Plates 62 & 63], while I also give the beautiful *Hadleigh Castle* [Plate 64], from a proof in the British Museum.

In 1844, seven years after Constable's death, Lucas issued from his house, 27, Westbourne Street, Eaton Square, fourteen further plates, with an appreciative testimonial by C. R. Leslie. Though some of these are as fine as those which Constable supervised and published, they have not quite the same prestige with collectors. This set consisted of the following plates, as numbered in Sir Frederick Wedmore's Catalogue :—

- No. 23, Porch of the Church at East Bergholt, Suffolk.
- No. 24, Gillingham Mill, Dorsetshire.
- No. 25, Sir Richard Steele's Cottage.
- No. 26, Jacques and the Wounded Stag.
- No. 27, Cornfields, near Brighton.
- No. 28, Stonehenge.
- No. 29, Willy Lott's House.
- No. 30, A Cottage in a Cornfield.
- No. 31, Hampstead Heath, Harrow in the distance.
- No. 32, Flatford Mill.
- No. 33, Castle Acre Priory.
- No. 34, View on the Orwell, near Ipswich.
- No. 35, Windmill, near Colchester.
- No. 36, Arundel Mill and Castle.

The plates of the two sets fused into a new issue, and published by Bohn in 1855, are rightly not considered at all by collectors.

Lucas ended his days in Fulham Workhouse. The beauty he has left behind him in his prints should command the gratitude of all lovers of Constable's art.



PLATE 29.

LANDSCAPE--EVENING. Dated 1802. (12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 17 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



A CORNFIELD, WITH FIGURES. c. 1816. (9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
From the oil painting in the Tate Gallery, London.



PLATE 31.

DEDHAM MILL. (Oil painting, 24 x 35 in.)
Reproduced by permission of Messrs. Scott & Fowles, New York.



PLATE 32.

DEDHAM VALE. *c.* 1809. ($9\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.



PLATE 33.

ON THE STOUR, NEAR DEDHAM. (10½ × 12½ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE 34.

DEDHAM MILL, ESSEX. Dated 1820. (21½ x 30 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.





VIEW OF HAMPTSTEAD HEATH. c. 1821. (61 x 121 in.)
From the oil painting in the Tate Gallery, London.



PLATE 37.

VIEW ON HAMPSLEAD HEATH. c. 1823. (13 x 19½ in.)
From the oil painting in the Tate Gallery, London.



HAMPSTEAD HEATH. (24 x 31 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



THE PONDS, HAMPSHEAD HEATH. (24½ x 31 in.)



WEST END FIELDS, HAMFSTEAD. (10 x 14 in.)



PLATE 41.

HAMPSTEAD—EVENING. (8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum



PLATE 42.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL. Dated 1823. (34 x 43½ ins.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL. (20 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 30 in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL. c. 1831. (14 x 20 in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.





PLATE 46.

A COUNTRY LANE. (7½ x 11½ in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.



PLATE 47.

THE CORNFIELD, OR COUNTRY LANE. Dated 1826. (56 x 48 in.)
From the oil painting in the National Gallery, London.



PLATE 48.

STUDY FOR "THE LEAPING HORSE." (51 x 74 in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



WINDMILL NEAR BRIGHTON. (6 x 9½ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.





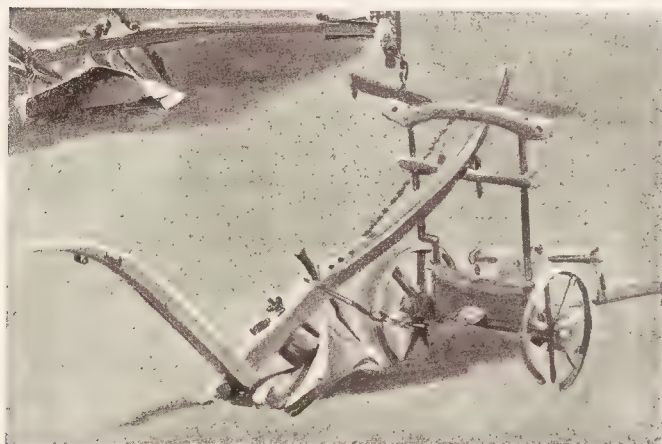
COAST SCENE, WITH FISHING BOATS. (12½ x 19½ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



SKETCH FOR "THE VALLEY FARM." (10 x 13½ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



ON THE BEACH, BRIGHTON. Dated 1824. ($9\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



STUDY OF TWO PLOUGHS. Dated 1814. ($6\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
From the oil painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE 54.

LANDSCAPE STUDY. (8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
From the water-colour in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE 55.

LANDSCAPE. (8½ x 6 in.)
From the water-colour in the Tate Gallery, London.



PLATE 56.

FITTLEWORTH MILL. Drawn 1834. (8 x 10 in.)
From the water-colour in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE 57.

WAREHOUSES AND SHIPPING ON THE ORVELL. Dated 1803. (9½ x 13 in.)
From the pencil drawing, with colour washes, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE 58.

KNOWLE HALL, WARWICKSHIRE. Dated 1820. (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
From the pencil drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum



RICHMOND BRIDGE WITH BARGES. Dated 1818. ($3\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ in.)
From the pencil drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



CART AND HORSES. Dated 1821. ($6\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ in.)
From the pencil drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PL. VI. 60.

FIR TREES AT HAMPSTEAD. Dated 1820. ($9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
From the pencil drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



PLATE 61.

WATER LANE, STRATFORD. Dated 1827. (13 x 8½ in.)
From the pencil and Indian ink drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum.





PLATE 68.

NOON. Mezzotint by David Lucas. (5½ x 8½ in.)
From a trial proof in the possession of Henry Perry Horne, Esq.



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